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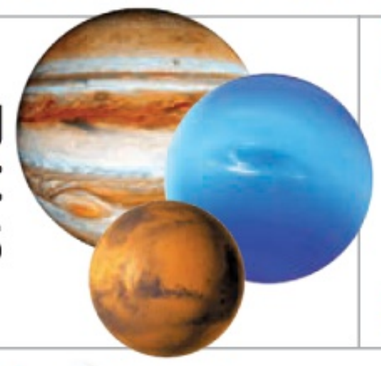
THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

NEWS
Literature ambassador is selected
p5

ALL ABOUT
Fascinating facts about the planets
p12



ARTS
New series spotlights wilderness
p20

February 21, 2025 • Vol. 6, Issue 252 • $5.99

THE WEEK Junior

Making sense of the world

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

EAGLES SOAR!

Philadelphia dominates Kansas City to win the Super Bowl p18

Eagles quarterback and Super Bowl MVP Jalen Hurts with the Vince Lombardi trophy

BIG BUSINESS
In the US, the poultry and egg industry contributes more than $663 billion to the nation's economy every year.

Two kinds of bird flu have now been found in cows.

Egg shortages in US

As bird flu spreads, the availability of eggs has decreased while prices have increased. The price of a dozen eggs is up to $9 or more in some places. Many supermarkets have few or no eggs and are limiting the quantity customers can buy. Egg prices are expected to continue rising.

Concerns rise over bird flu

New types of bird flu, a virus that has affected animals around the world, have been found in ducks and cows in the US for the first time. The discovery raised concerns about a wider outbreak.

What is bird flu?

Bird flu spreads mostly through birds like chickens, ducks, and turkeys and is transmitted through animal droppings or saliva. A version of the virus, known as H5N1, first appeared in the US in January 2022. Since then, it has affected more than 153 million birds in the wild, at commercial farms, at zoos, and in people's backyards. It has also been detected in cats in the wild and in homes, as well as in wild animals like raccoons, bears, and sea lions. Several dozen people have been infected. While the virus is usually fatal for animals, it typically causes cold-like symptoms in people.

The H5N1 virus under a microscope

What is happening now?

On January 31, public health experts reported that they had found a rare version of bird flu, called H5N9, at a duck farm in California. It was the first time H5N9 has been confirmed in the US. Then, on February 5, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said a new strain (subtype) of H5N1, called D1.1, had been detected in cows in Nevada. It was the first time D1.1 has been found in cows and the second time bird flu of any kind has been found in them. The first time, in 2024, was a surprise to health experts, who at the time did not think cows could catch the virus. Since 2024, bird flu has been detected in more than 950 cow herds in 16 states. Experts said these new versions of the virus could signal that it is changing and could spread further in animals and possibly humans.

What are the effects?

The most widespread effects have occurred at poultry and egg farms, including some of the largest producers in the US. Farmers have had to kill infected birds, leading to the deaths of more than 147 million birds since 2022. That means there are many fewer birds and eggs available to consumers, which has driven up the price of eggs and poultry in stores (see the box above).

Farmers and egg producers are working to re-establish their flocks while also protecting animals from the virus. On February 7, New York state officials ordered live poultry markets in several counties to close for at least five days after seven cases of bird flu were detected. The markets must sanitize their facilities before they can reopen.

What are the current risks to humans?

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said the virus is not currently a threat to humans. Although 67 cases have been reported in people since March 2024, nearly all of them involved farm workers who were exposed to sick animals and not wearing protective gear like masks or gloves. One person, who was elderly and cared for sick birds, died. Most of the symptoms have been mild to moderate, such as fevers, eye infections, and stuffy noses. The virus is not commonly transmitted from one person to another and is not spread through properly cooked food.

What will happen next?

Public health officials will continue to monitor the spread of bird flu across the US. Farms will test milk and continue taking safety precautions, such as having workers shower before they enter or exit facilities, rinsing down vehicles that drive onto the property, and using laser lights to scare off wild birds. Zoos will move vulnerable species to areas where they will not come into contact with infected animals. Experts have advised people to avoid contact with sick or wild animals and wear protective gear when handling their own livestock or birds. Scientists will continue studying how the virus transforms and working to lower the odds of additional infections in livestock and humans.

New hate crime laws in Australia

Australia has made jail time mandatory for people convicted of hate crimes. The decision was made after a recent increase in antisemitic (hostility or prejudice against Jewish people) attacks on synagogues, schools, and other places used by Jewish communities in the nation.

People will now serve minimum sentences that range in length based on the seriousness of their crime. The punishment for less-serious crimes will be at least 12 months in jail. These include such offenses as painting racist graffiti or giving a salute used by the Nazis (German political party that killed 6 million Jewish people and millions of others during the Holocaust from 1933–1945) in public. People who commit more serious crimes, such as terrorism (use of violence to reach a goal), will be punished with at least six years in prison.

Strict hate crime laws were put into place last year in Australia, but this is the first legislation that makes jail time automatic. "We want people to be held to account," said Anthony Albanese, Australia's prime minister.

Anthony Albanese

MAJOR DISTRICT
Los Angeles has the second-largest school district in the US, after New York City, with more than 429,000 students.

Palisades Charter Elementary before the wildfires

Budget set to rebuild LA schools

On February 4, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), in California, said it is setting aside $2.2 billion to rebuild schools that were destroyed in the recent wildfires. This also includes funds to upgrade the rest of the district's 1,543 schools to help them withstand natural disasters.

About $725 million of the budget will go toward rebuilding three schools: Palisades Charter Elementary and Marquez Charter Elementary, which were destroyed by the fires, and Palisades Charter High School, about 66% of which burned down. Students at those schools are learning online or attending other schools.

The rest of the funds will go toward major upgrades throughout the district. This includes $550 million for fire-resistant metal roofs and structural improvements to protect buildings during earthquakes. Every classroom will have air purification and cooling systems, and outdoor sensors will track air quality.

Another $700 million will be spent on environmental projects. These include adding plants and trees to provide more green space and shade. This will keep buildings cooler and reduce energy costs. An additional $122 million will expand solar energy systems at all schools.

Some of these upgrades were already planned but are being expanded or fast-tracked. Much of the funding will come from money voters had approved for repairs in November 2024. LAUSD superintendent Alberto Carvalho said he hopes at least two of the new schools will be completed by the 2028–29 school year. Students could return to their schools in portable classrooms by next fall.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A SWEET DEBUT

The complete soundtrack to the 1975 animated TV special *Be My Valentine, Charlie Brown* was released for the first time and shot to the top of the music charts. The award-winning show was one of 45 specials starring the Peanuts gang.

The hit album

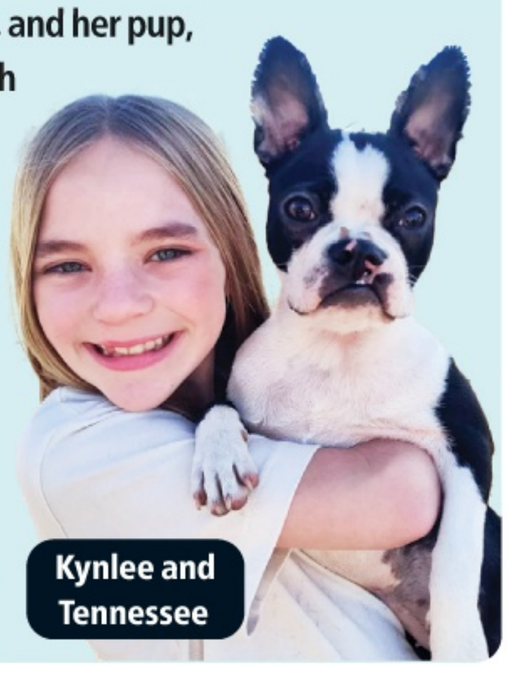
MAKING A COMEBACK

After an outpouring of requests, Crayola said it will bring back eight retired crayon colors for a limited time. The colors—Dandelion, Blizzard Blue, Magic Mint, Mulberry, Orange Red, Violet Blue, Lemon Yellow, and Raw Umber—date as far back as 1990. Crayola said it hopes the move "will delight and surprise consumers."

The "unretired" crayons

FINDING A FRIEND

When Kynlee Rogers, who lives in Kentucky, adopted a Boston terrier, she didn't just get a pet—she also found a friend who is like her. Kynlee, age 10, and her pup, Tennessee, both have a facial difference called a cleft lip. Kynlee's mom said the dog has changed her daughter's life because "she's not alone."



Kynlee and Tennessee

ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (5); GINTS ZILBALODIS/BBC STUDIOS; LOC; ON THIS PAGE: LAUSD; GETTY IMAGES; LEE MENDELSON FILM PRODUCTIONS; CRAYOLA; KIMBERLY ROGERS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); AP

DID YOU KNOW?
The federal government employs about 3 million people, making it the nation's 15th largest workforce.

People protesting outside the California State Capitol in Sacramento on February 5

Phone calls to senators

The Senate has had an "unusually high volume" of calls, a memo reported. People are contacting elected officials to voice their opinion about the President's actions but often can't leave a message because mailboxes are full. Senate voicemail boxes can hold about 1,000 messages before becoming full.

Protests against President's actions

Thousands of people across the country marched in the streets last week to protest the actions of President Donald Trump and his administration. The first weeks of Trump's second term have ushered in sweeping new policies that represent a departure from how the nation is typically run.

What happened?

On February 5, people gathered in all 50 states—including in large cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and at state capitols in California, Minnesota, Michigan, Texas, Wisconsin, and Indiana—chanting and holding signs. The protests were organized online under several hashtags, including #50501, which stands for 50 protests, 50 states, one day.

What were people protesting?

Demonstrators rallied against numerous policies and budget cuts Trump has announced. Many people objected to his plan to shut down the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which provides billions of dollars in humanitarian aid to people overseas. Others denounced Trump for giving Elon Musk, a billionaire adviser to the President who holds no elected position, access to sensitive information at US agencies, including the Treasury Department's payment systems. Many people marched to support "birthright citizenship." The US Constitution guarantees citizenship to children who are born in the US, even if their parents are here illegally, and Trump said he would like to eliminate this guarantee.

What will happen next?

Many states, cities, and organizations have filed lawsuits (legal disputes) against Trump's orders. In these instances, courts will decide whether Trump's policies can stay in place or if they should be put on hold until the cases are heard. A federal judge paused Trump's plan to put 2,200 USAID employees on leave to allow time for a judge to determine if Trump has the right to close the agency. Labor unions have filed lawsuits to prevent Musk from accessing sensitive federal data. As of February 10, at least three judges had blocked Trump's order to end birthright citizenship. Some of these cases may ultimately be decided by the Supreme Court (America's most powerful court of law).

WORD OF THE WEEK

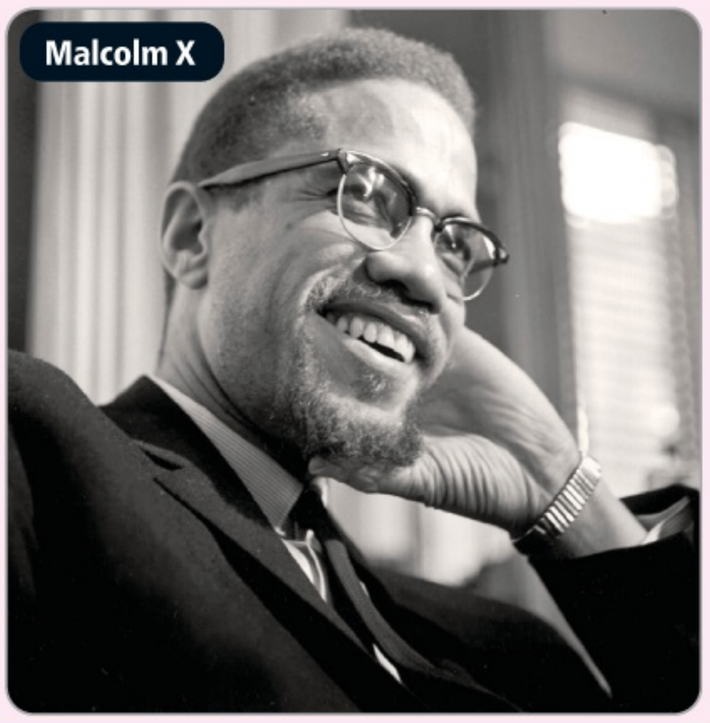
BUDGET

A budget is the amount of money available to spend for a particular purpose. It takes its name from the French word *bougette*, meaning "little bag" or "wallet," which in turn came from the Latin *bulga* ("leather sack"). "Budget" was later applied to the contents of the little bag in the form of money.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

February 21, 1965
Civil rights leader is killed

On February 21, 1965, civil rights leader Malcolm X, age 39, was assassinated (killed for political reasons) while speaking at an event in New York City. He was born Malcolm Little in Nebraska in 1925 and spoke out about the oppression of Black people. The story he wrote of his life, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, was published after he died and is considered a classic US autobiography.



Retired Lt. Col. Harry Stewart Jr.

Decorated pilot dies at age 100

Retired Lt. Col. Harry Stewart Jr., a pilot during World War II (1939–1945) who broke racial barriers in the US military and earned honors for his heroism, died on February 2 at age 100. Stewart was one of the last surviving combat pilots of the 332nd Fighter Group, also known as the Tuskegee Airmen, the nation's first Black military pilots. The group's achievements helped pave the way for desegregating the military and the civil rights movement.

The A'One

Basketball sneaker is unveiled

Las Vegas Aces basketball star A'ja Wilson has unveiled her first sneaker for Nike. The A'One features a pink design and a pearlized Nike swoosh. Wilson, who has won two WNBA championships and two Olympic gold medals, spent two years working on the shoe's design. She said she hopes kids wearing them feel "the power to dream big, then put in the work—in style and confidence."

Puppy Bowl winner named

One of the competitors

Team Fluff beat Team Ruff, 68–66, to win the Lombarky Trophy during the 21st annual Puppy Bowl. The televised event, which aired before the Super Bowl on February 9, promotes pet adoption. A total of 143 puppies from 75 shelters in 38 states and two countries competed to get their team's toys to the end zone first. Animal Planet said every dog featured in previous Puppy Bowls has found a home.

Mac Barnett and one of his books

FROM PAGE TO SCREEN
The stop-motion animated series *Shape Island* is based on books by Mac Barnett.

Literature ambassador begins term

The Library of Congress, in partnership with Every Child a Reader, announced that children's book author Mac Barnett will be the new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. The prestigious two-year appointment gives an author the opportunity to bring attention to the value of reading for children.

Barnett, age 42, is the ninth author to hold the position, which was established in 2008. He has written more than 60 books for young readers, including the Mac B., Kid Spy series and The First Cat in Space graphic novels. His books, known for their humorous plots and quirky characters, have sold millions of copies worldwide and been translated into more than 30 languages. Barnett has received numerous awards, including two Caldecott Honor awards (a top prize for picture books).

The Library of Congress's medal for the position

He succeeds award-winning author Meg Medina. She is a Cuban American who was the program's first Latina ambassador, serving from 2023 through 2024. Previous ambassadors include celebrated authors Jacqueline Woodson, Jason Reynolds, and Kate DiCamillo.

Each ambassador promotes a specific program during their term. Barnett plans to champion the power of picture books, which he called "a beautiful, sophisticated, and vibrant art form." He will take his platform, "Behold, the Picture Book! Let's Celebrate Stories We Can Feel, Hear, and See," to cities across the US to speak with children and families. Schools, libraries, and other organizations can submit a proposal to host Barnett at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-MacBarnett.

Shaina Birkhead, associate executive director of Every Child a Reader, said Barnett was chosen for his passion for storytelling. The role is a "profound honor," Barnett said. "I feel energized to proclaim the many glories of children's literature."

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Seal found napping on floor of hotel room" *UPI*

GETTY IMAGES (2); NIKE; ANIMAL PLANET/DISCOVERY; LOC; COURTESY THE PUBLISHER; ON LEFT PAGE: AP; GETTY IMAGES (3)

Around the world

The first pet store to sell the treats

London, United Kingdom
New type of dog treats sold in stores

Dog treats made from lab-grown meat are being sold in London. Chick Bites are the world's first pet products made with lab-grown meat, according to Meatly, the company that made them. Pets eat about 20% of all the meat consumed in pet-friendly countries, and some people say growing meat in a lab is better for the planet because it requires less land, water, and energy than raising animals on farms.

Residents look over their property.

Santorini, Greece
Earthquake tremors on island

Schools on the Greek island of Santorini have been closed after a series of earthquakes jolted the area. Since February 1, there have been more than 800 earthquake tremors. There haven't been any injuries or major damage, but experts are worried about the risk of a larger earthquake or a landslide. Approximately 13,000 of Santorini's 15,500 residents have left the island, and emergency workers are standing by.

A polling station

Ecuador
Presidential race continues

Ecuador is set to conduct a second round of presidential elections in April after both leading candidates failed to secure a victory in the polls. More than 83% of registered voters participated in the first round on February 9. When *The Week Junior* went to press, neither the current president, Daniel Noboa, nor his opponent, Luisa González, had received more than 50% of the votes.

Czech Republic
Beavers solve a problem

Beavers living in the Brdy Protected Landscape accidentally helped local authorities by building a dam (water barrier). Park managers had been waiting for permits to create a dam structure in the Vltava River in order to restore habitats for wildlife. Instead, beavers built a natural dam at the site, saving the authorities more than $1 million.

A beaver

Uganda
Vaccine trial begins

A medical trial has been launched in Uganda to test a new vaccine (medicine that prevents an illness) against a virus called Ebola. Uganda is currently experiencing an outbreak of Ebola, which can be transmitted from person to person. The vaccine is being tested on "contacts" (people who have been in contact with infected patients), as well as people who have been close to the contacts. The first dose was given on February 3.

Giving the vaccine

GETTY IMAGES (7); REUTERS; SHUTTERSTOCK; PATRICIO D PALACIOS/ANDRES GAMBINI

Around the world

Basant in 2007

Lahore, Pakistan
Kite-flying ban passed

Flying kites has been permanently banned across Punjab province in Pakistan, with kite fliers now facing prison and a $7,200 fine. The ban took effect before the Basant festival, a celebration of spring that traditionally involves kite-flying. Officials said the law will protect people from being injured by metal or glass-coated kite strings.

A poster for the film

China
Animated movie breaks records

An animated film has broken a record in China by making more than $1 billion during its first two weeks in theaters. *Ne Zha 2* is about a young boy with magical powers who teams up with a dragon prince to fight demons. The movie, which is based on Chinese mythology, has been so popular that fans have been buying figurines of the characters. Following the film's success in China, it is being released in Australia, Canada, and the US.

A car stuck in Obihiro

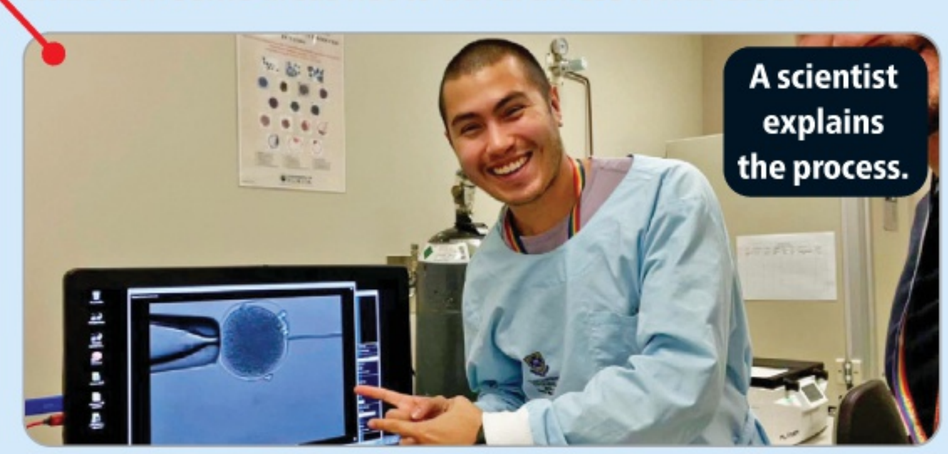
Japan
Country hit by heavy snowfall

Roads were closed and flights and trains were canceled after a record-breaking snowstorm hit Hokkaido, Japan's northern island. Reports said that on February 4, in the city of Obihiro, 4 feet of snow fell in 12 hours. Meanwhile, temperatures in parts of Japan dropped below 14° F. Hundreds of schools were closed due to the wintry weather, and authorities advised citizens in some areas not to travel unless it was essential.

Waitangi, New Zealand
Waitangi Day observed

Thousands of people gathered for Waitangi Day on February 6. The event marks the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, an agreement reached between Britain and Māori tribes in 1840. The Māori are a group of Indigenous people (first to inhabit a place). Protests were held during some celebrations because many Māori people believe the current government's policies harm their rights and well-being.

Celebrations at the event


A scientist explains the process.

Queensland, Australia
Scientists create kangaroo embryo

For the first time, a kangaroo embryo (unborn baby in the earliest stages of development) has been produced through a process called in vitro fertilization. Scientists at the University of Queensland fertilized an egg cell in a laboratory using a sperm cell from an eastern grey kangaroo. The researchers hope this technique can also be used to help save endangered species.

Should pets be allowed on the furniture?

Some people let their animals roam freely around the house, but others say no way.

What you need to know

- **In 2024, there were 196.9 million pets in the US. Dogs are the most popular, followed by cats.**
- **Last year, pet owners in the US spent an estimated $150.6 billion on their animals, including food, grooming, training, walking, and sitting.**
- **A 2021 study found that more than 50% of dog and cat owners in the US let pets on the furniture, even beds.**
- **In a Pew Research poll, 51% of owners said their pets are "as much a part of their family as a human member."**

LOTS OF LOVE
In the US in 2024, house pets included 89.7 million dogs, 73.8 million cats, and more than 11 million fish.

Pet owners often say their furry friends are part of the family, and they treat them accordingly. In one recent poll, 83% of pet owners said they had thrown their animal a birthday party, while 80% reported sharing their food with them and 73% admitted to letting their pets sleep in bed with them. But not everyone agrees. Although pets bring a tremendous amount of joy into our homes, some people say it's important to set boundaries with them. That can include keeping them off the furniture. Even animal behavior experts disagree on whether letting pets climb up on a sofa or bed is OK. What do you think? Should pets be allowed on the furniture?

Yes—they're part of the family

Really, what's better than having a cute animal curled up next to you on the couch? Snuggling is a good way for humans and their pets to bond and show affection, and it can be a plus for everyone's well-being. Some people say it's unsanitary to let animals on the upholstery or bed covers because they can spread dirt and germs. But people who keep their pets groomed, wipe their faces and paws, and treat them for fleas won't have to worry about that. And if they're worried about boundaries and behavior, owners can always train their pets not to scratch or chew the furniture and to follow the "off" command when necessary.

No—they don't belong there

Pets can make furniture so gross it's beyond saving. If you've ever tried to get fur off a sofa, you know it can be hard to clean up after animals. Plus, they spin around or knead with their paws when they're getting comfortable, which can rip holes in the fabric. Besides dirt and damage, pets can bring serious viruses, bacteria, or other germs into the house. Do you really want to share a pillow with all that? No thanks. And many trainers say letting pets on the furniture can affect their behavior because they think they're the boss and they might not follow commands. Pets may be part of the family, but the truth is, we're in charge.

YES Three reasons pets should be allowed on the furniture

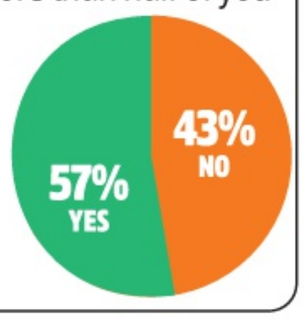
1. **Snuggling up to their humans on a couch or bed can help pets bond with their owners and makes everyone happy.**
2. **Pets that are kept clean and healthy will not damage any furniture or spread germs to humans.**
3. **Pets can be trained to get off the furniture when they're told to do so.**

NO Three reasons pets should not be allowed on the furniture

1. **Pets spread dirt on the furniture and can scratch or poke holes in the fabric, even without meaning to.**
2. **Animals can carry serious germs and diseases, which are easy for people to catch when they're close together.**
3. **Setting boundaries ensures that pets listen to their humans and follow commands.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked you if our first President was the most important. More than half of you gave George Washington the top spot, but the rest disagreed.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think pets should be allowed on the furniture or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

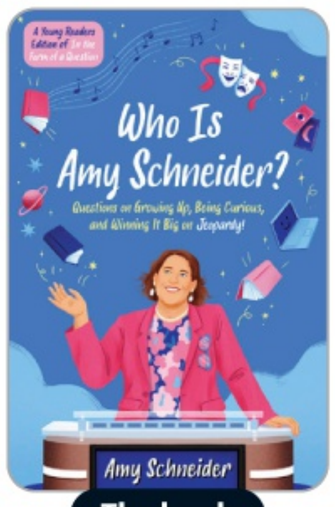
The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

The power of curiosity

Jeopardy! star Amy Schneider tells the story of her success in a new book.

Amy Schneider is the most successful woman ever to compete on *Jeopardy!*, holding the record for the second-longest winning streak in the quiz show's history. Now she is sharing her journey with young readers in *Who Is Amy Schneider?*, an adapted version of her 2023 memoir *In the Form of a Question*.



The book

Schneider, age 45, grew up in Dayton, Ohio. Her mom was a teacher and encouraged her to ask questions and seek answers. She fell in love with learning early on, taking summer classes at the Dayton Natural History Museum and collecting minerals.

When Schneider was in eighth grade, her classmates voted her "most likely to appear on *Jeopardy!*" Still, she never imagined she would go on to win $1.3 million across 40 consecutive games from November 2021 to January 2022. Leading up to the show, she said mental preparation was as important as studying information. Schneider told *The Week Junior* that she kept her focus by telling herself, "Don't let them see how nervous you are."

In her book, Schneider reflects on her childhood curiosity and her time on *Jeopardy!* She also shares how her journey as a transgender woman shaped her path and helped her discover and embrace her true self. Schneider says the core message of her story is that curiosity became a winning strategy. "There is so much value in just asking questions," she said.

Through her story, Schneider said she hopes to inspire kids to take on challenges and not fear making mistakes. "Be OK with being wrong about things," she said. "In fact, seek out being wrong because that is how you get to being right."

Amy Schneider

SHOW HISTORY
Jeopardy! first aired on March 30, 1964, and was hosted by the legendary television personality Art Fleming.

A music milestone

Puerto Rican singer-songwriter Bad Bunny, age 30, has made history as the first Latin artist to reach 100 songs on the Billboard Hot 100. His latest album, *Debí Tirar Más Fotos* ("I Should Have Taken More Photos"), debuted at number one, and all 17 songs on the album hit the Hot 100. The title track, "DTMF," was in the top five for more than three weeks. The artist's sixth studio album was inspired by memories of growing up in Puerto Rico. "I really feel proud of my people, about my country, about my culture," he said.

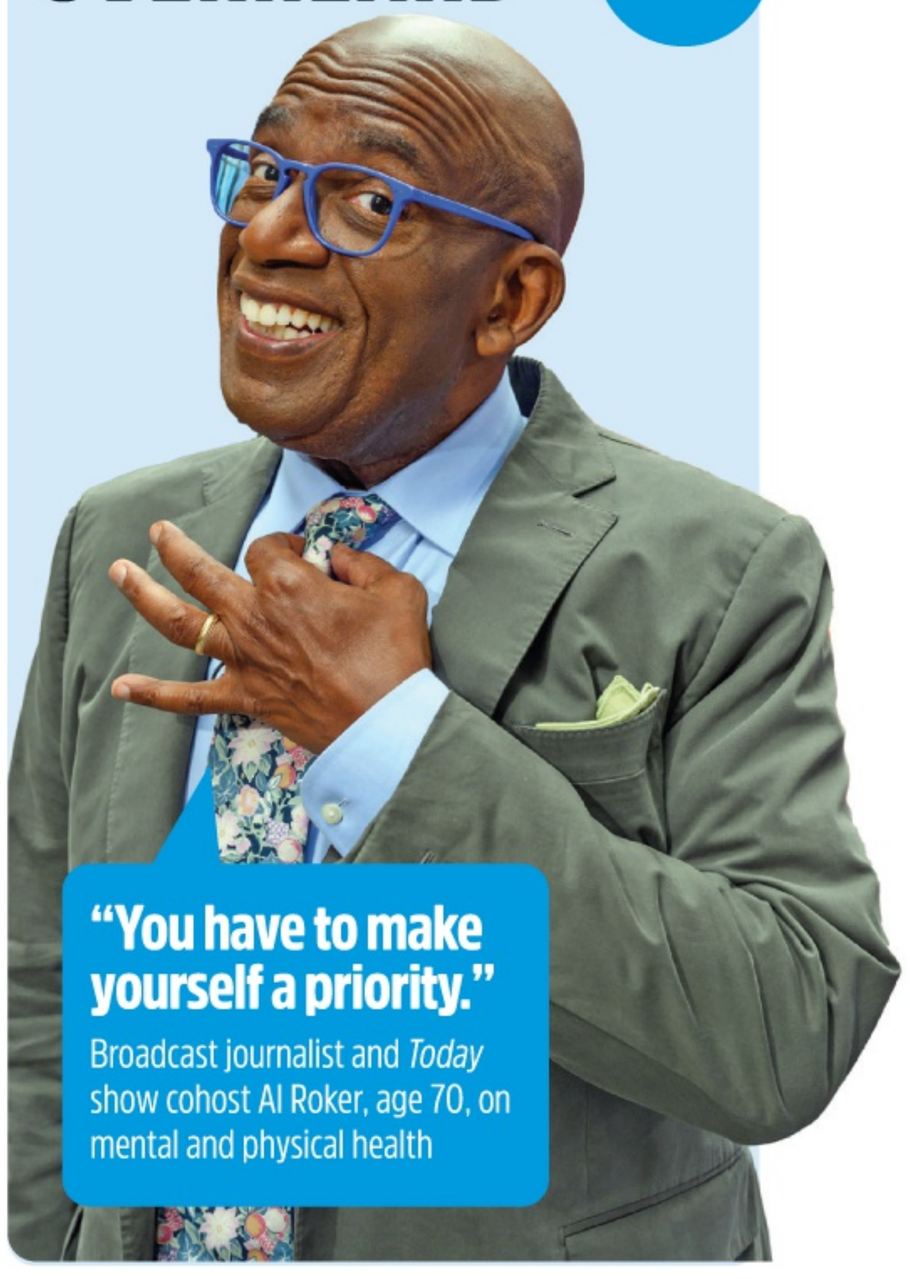
Bad Bunny

Jaelyn Liu

Taking home gold

On January 12, Jaelyn Liu, age 15, became the youngest US women's foil fencer to win a gold medal at a senior World Cup. Liu is a foilist, a fencer who competes with a foil (a light fencing sword) to score points by making contact with their opponent's torso. Liu, who is ranked 93rd in the world, defeated some of the top-ranking foilists, including US Olympic gold medalist Lee Kiefer, at the Hong Kong event to capture the gold. Following her victory, Liu said she has set her sights on representing the US at the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California.

OVERHEARD


"You have to make yourself a priority."
Broadcast journalist and *Today* show cohost Al Roker, age 70, on mental and physical health

GETTY IMAGES (4); COURTESY OF PUBLISHER

DID YOU KNOW?
There are more than 6,000 frog species around the world, and new ones are still being found.

Cricket frogs' movements are no longer a mystery.

Giant weightlifting frogs

Goliath frogs, the largest frogs in the world, build nests using stones that weigh more than half their own body weight. These 6-pound amphibians have been seen lifting rocks as heavy as 4.4 pounds in order to create safe areas in ponds for their eggs and tadpoles.

A goliath frog

How a tiny frog "skitters" on water

For years, scientists have been mystified by the way some frog species appeared to glide across the surface of a body of water in a movement they called "skittering." Recently, a team observed one of these frogs more closely and found there's more to it than meets the eye. The frogs do a series of "belly flops" so quickly that it creates the illusion that they are walking on water.

The researchers studied the northern cricket frog, a species found throughout eastern North America, including in US states such as Kentucky and Virginia. As one of the smallest North American frog species, these animals can easily fit on a human thumb. Their tiny size and rapid movement have made it difficult to see exactly how they travel.

One of the frogs in midair

To find out the secret to the frogs' peculiar behavior, the researchers set up high-speed cameras to record the creatures' movements. They noticed that the skittering motion took place in four stages. First was takeoff, in which the frog used its powerful hind legs to launch itself from the water into the air. In midair, it stretched out its legs for balance and stability. Then it splashed back down below the surface of the water and, finally, pulled its legs inward to prepare for the next leap. All of this took place in about one second.

Since experts had previously thought the tiny amphibians bounced on top of the water like a skipping stone, they were surprised to find that a large part of the frog's body sank into the water each time it came down. The findings show that the frogs moved similarly to a dolphin or porpoise jumping out of the sea, so the researchers said the action should be called "porpoising" instead of skittering.

Experts knew that frogs were great jumpers, but only a few move like porpoises. Why they do this is a mystery. "The humble cricket frog lives nearby, and yet it still surprised us with its capabilities, further motivating our curiosity to understand the living world," said researcher Jake Socha. This newfound understanding could help experts design better robots and drones for water testing or rescue missions.

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Virachey National Park, Cambodia

Virachey National Park, established in 1993, is Cambodia's largest national park. Measuring about 1,284 square miles, the park is filled with trees that are more than 1,000 years old. It provides habitats for hundreds of species of birds, including the great hornbill and red-collared woodpecker, and large mammals such as tigers and elephants. While much of the park remains unexplored by humans, a recent study revealed several rare species living there, such as the clouded leopard, the sun bear, and the Sunda pangolin, an unusual mammal with scaly skin.

A sun bear

SOWING THE SEEDS
Tomatoes were first grown as food crops about 7,000 years ago in South America.

Ripe tomatoes look welcoming to insects, but they have a secret weapon.

Tomato plants' slimy defenses

Scientists have discovered that the hairy stems on tomato plants deter insect pests by shooting out a syrupy substance.

Jared Popowski from the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands made this discovery by mistake when he was studying a plant, capturing the moment on camera. He released small insects called western flower thrips and saw them crawl up the plant in search of fruit and leaves to feed on.

As the insects touched the stalks' tiny hairs, which are called glandular trichomes, it triggered the trichomes to release droplets of liquid in less than one thousandth of a second. These sticky droplets collected on the insects and weighed them down, making it difficult for them to move and stopping them from eating the plant.

Eduardo de la Peña at the Spanish National Research Council said finding out more about tomato plants' "natural weaponry" could help manage pests. Wild tomato plants naturally have more trichomes, so scientists think that breeding crop plants with wild ones could make them more resistant to insect pests.

Animal of the week: Florida manatee

New research has found that Florida manatees, also known as sea cows, are not actually native to the state. Scientists now think the animals probably started moving to the area from the West Indies in the 18th century.

- **LIFE SPAN:** Up to 60 years in the wild
- **HABITAT:** Florida's warm waters
- **SIZE:** About 9 feet long, 1,100 pounds
- **DIET:** Aquatic plants, such as seagrass
- **FUN FACT:** Unlike humans, manatees lose teeth and grow new ones throughout their whole lives.

Good week / Bad week

Turtle doves

There are 25% more turtle doves in western Europe now than there were four years ago. Experts think this is the result of a temporary ban on hunting the doves in some countries, along with conservation efforts.

Koalas in New South Wales

A forest where koalas live in New South Wales, Australia, has lost 17,700 acres of trees since 2023. The head of the state's government once promised to create a national park to protect the koalas, but this hasn't happened yet.

SHUTTERSTOCK; GETTY IMAGES (4); ON LEFT PAGE: ALAMY (3); WEISS ET AL., J. EXP. BIOL., 2024; GETTY IMAGES

Ask an expert

"Why do rhinos have horns?" Noah, 10, Washington

Ron Magill
Wildlife expert, Zoo Miami

The horn's main purpose is to defend against predators and other rhinos during conflicts, such as territory disputes. Some rhinos also use it to break branches and dig up roots to feed on. It is not a true horn since it is made mainly of keratin, the same substance found in human hair and nails.

A white rhino

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about Zoo Miami at zoomiami.org.

The planets of our

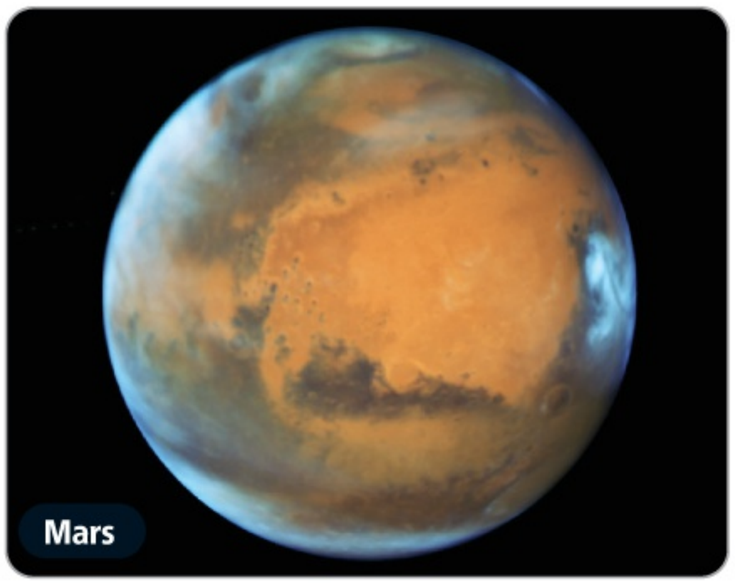
Find out more about the fascinating celestial bodies that orbit the Sun.

Located in the Milky Way galaxy, the Sun and planets of our solar system formed together about 4.6 billion years ago.

Claudius Ptolemy

What is a planet?

Definitions of the planets date at least as far back as the year 150, when Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy famously documented them. A more recent definition came in 2006, when the International Astronomical Union (IAU) said that a planet in our solar system must orbit the Sun, be large enough that gravity has shaped it into a sphere, and have no objects of similar size near its orbit. This description is not universally accepted, however. In July 2024, a group of scientists proposed a new standard, with stricter qualifications for size. The new definition, if accepted by the IAU, would classify more celestial bodies as planets.



Mars

The solid planets

The four planets in our solar system that are closest to the Sun are, in order, Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. All four of these planets have solid surfaces. Mercury is the smallest planet in the solar system, while Venus is the hottest and the third brightest object in the sky, after the Sun and Moon. Earth is the biggest of the inner planets and the only one that currently has liquid water on its surface. Mars likely had liquid water in the past. Beyond Mars there is an asteroid belt (a region of space that contains many asteroids). Then there are the gas planets of the solar system.

FAR, FAR AWAY

There are more than 5,600 exoplanets, which are known planets outside our solar system.

MIGHTY PLANET

Jupiter is more than twice as massive as all the other planets in the solar system combined.

Other sights in the sky

In addition to planets, there are other remarkable celestial bodies in our solar system. **Asteroids** are rocky objects that orbit the Sun and come in many shapes. They are made of material left over from the formation of the solar system. **Comets** are made of rock and ice. They orbit the Sun, and as they approach it, parts of their bodies turn into gas. Comets can form tails of dust and gas, which can span millions of miles and occasionally be seen from Earth. **Meteoroids** are among the smallest objects in the solar system and are formed by collisions between asteroids or by breaking off from comets. If a meteoroid enters Earth's atmosphere, the flash of light it creates is called a **meteor**. The part that hits the ground is called a **meteorite**.

GETTY IMAGES (7); NASA

solar system

FUN FACT
The word "planet" comes from the Greek word *planetes* ("wanderer") because of how it appears to move through the night sky.

A photo illustration of the Sun and planets (from left to right): Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune

Jupiter

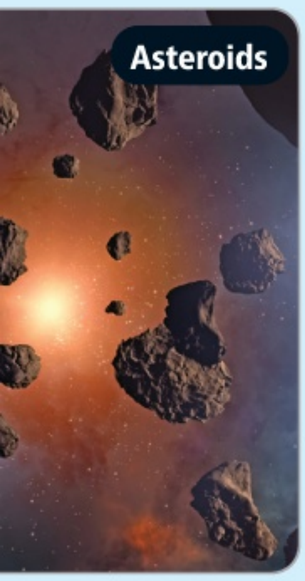
The gas planets

The first gas planet past Mars is Jupiter, followed by Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Jupiter and Saturn are gas giants, made up mainly of hydrogen and helium with small cores of rock and ice. Uranus and Neptune, meanwhile, are ice giants. They are made up of different gases than Jupiter and Saturn and have larger icy cores. All these outer planets have rings around them, made of ice, dust, and rock particles, although Saturn's rings are the most visible. Jupiter is the biggest and oldest planet in the solar system and has 95 recognized moons. One of Jupiter's moons, named Ganymede, is bigger than Mercury. The planet with the most moons in the solar system is Saturn, which has 146 recognized by the IAU.

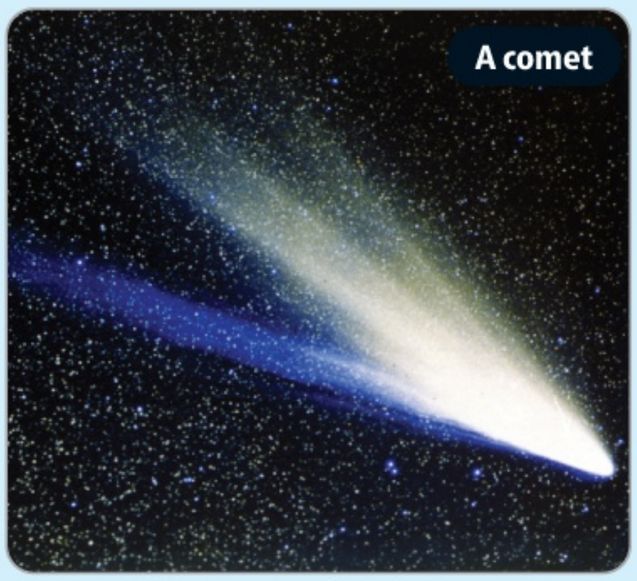
A view of Pluto from its largest moon, Charon

Dwarf planets

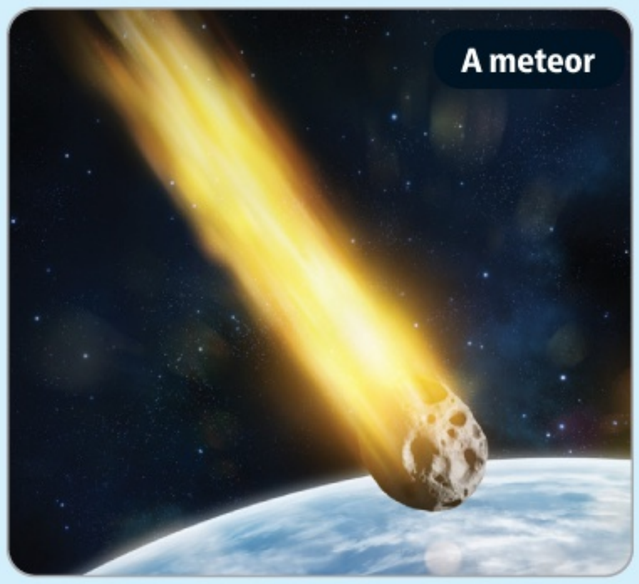
In addition to the eight main planets, there are also dwarf planets. Unlike full-size planets, dwarf planets do not have gravity strong enough to push away other objects near their orbit. There are five known dwarf planets, but there may be at least 100 more yet to be discovered. Pluto is the biggest dwarf planet and had been considered a planet for decades until the IAU issued its new definition in 2006. Pluto and three other dwarf planets—Haumea, Eris, and Makemake—are located in an area called the Kuiper Belt, a region of icy objects past Neptune. The other dwarf planet, Ceres, is located in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter.



Asteroids



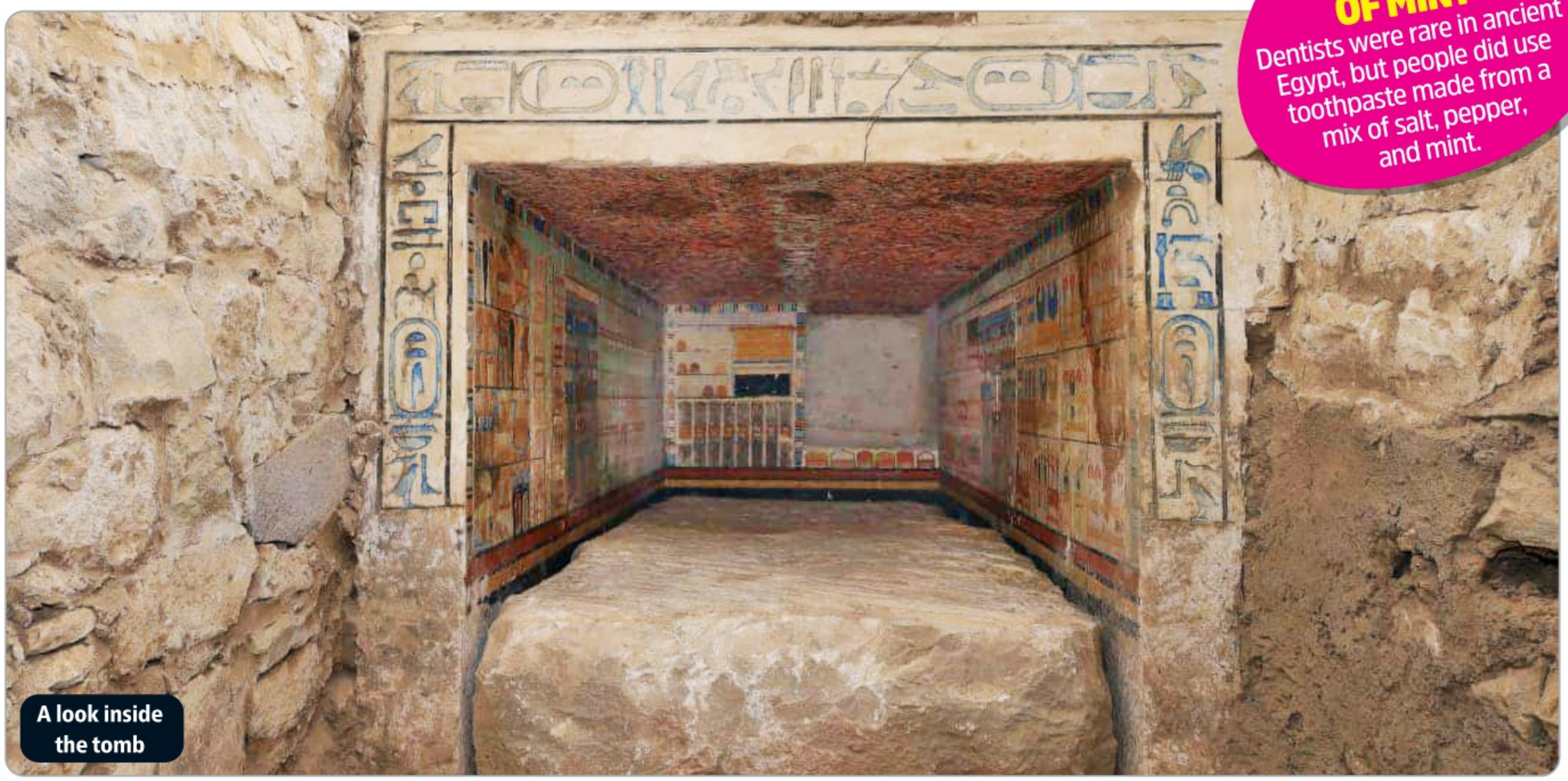
A comet



A meteor

HINT OF MINT

Dentists were rare in ancient Egypt, but people did use toothpaste made from a mix of salt, pepper, and mint.



A look inside the tomb

Royal doctor's tomb found

A team of experts uncovered the tomb of a royal doctor, who may have treated pharaohs (kings) in ancient Egypt before his death about 4,100 years ago. The tomb was found at Saqqara, where many tombs and pyramids were built.

The doctor's tomb was behind a secret door and decorated with intricate carvings and colorful paintings. The artwork helped archaeologists (scientists who study objects left by people long ago) learn about the doctor. His name, which was carved on a stone coffin inside the tomb in hieroglyphics, was Tetinebefou. Hieroglyphics are an ancient Egyptian writing system that used symbols and pictures.

Art on the tomb's walls

The tomb was a "mastaba," a flat-roofed building that Egyptians used for important people. A man of Tetinebefou's status would have been buried with many beautiful objects. Like many ancient burial sites, however, it had been looted by thieves, and any items that were originally buried with him are gone.

The ancient Egyptians had a highly advanced knowledge of medicine and the human body, and many doctors at the time specialized in certain fields of medicine. But writings in the tomb suggest that Tetinebefou was an expert in many areas and had several jobs, including chief palace doctor, priest, dentist, and director of medicinal plants. The well-preserved paintings on the wall show images of jars and vases, which he probably used in his work.

Another one of the doctor's titles was "conjurer of the goddess Serket." Serket was an Egyptian goddess who was associated with healing, magic, and protection. It was believed that she could protect people from deadly snakebites and scorpion stings, but she would also send these animals to punish people she disapproved of.

Philippe Collombert, who led the team of researchers, told Live Science that Tetinebefou was probably a "specialist in poisonous bites," which is why he was linked to Serket. His many job titles also suggested that he was a very skilled doctor who "was certainly the main physician at the royal court, so he would have treated the pharaoh himself," Collombert said.

The team was not sure which pharaohs Tetinebefou served, but they hope to do further research to learn more about him.

The Step Pyramid of Djoser

Ancient Egyptians created pyramids to demonstrate the power and wealth of the people buried within them. The first pyramid ever built was the Step Pyramid of Djoser (above) at Saqqara, which is now about 4,700 years old. Step pyramids get their name because the outside looks like gigantic steps leading to the top. The Step Pyramid of Djoser was built as a tomb for a pharaoh named Djoser, who ruled Egypt around 2670 BCE.

This striking early pyramid has six tiers of steps and is about 200 feet tall. Beneath the structure are 3.5 miles of tunnels and about 400 rooms. Most of the treasures that Djoser was buried with, along with his mummy (preserved and bandaged body), were stolen long ago by thieves.

Nasal swab could improve asthma care

A new nasal swab can identify the type of asthma a person has, according to the scientists who created it. That information could help doctors improve treatment.

Asthma is a disease that makes breathing difficult. There are two different kinds of asthma: T2-high and T2-low. The two subcategories of T2-low are called T-17 high and low-low. Historically, making an accurate diagnosis of asthma type required taking samples of lung tissue during a difficult, invasive surgery.

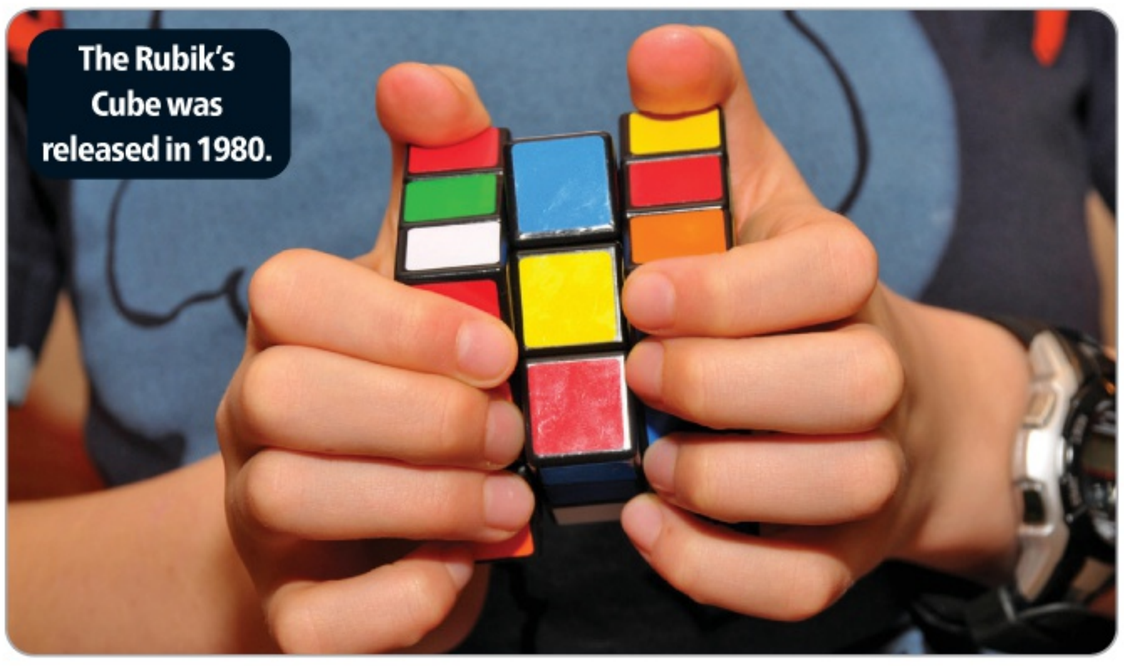
DID YOU KNOW?
About 28 million people in the US have asthma, including about 4.9 million children under the age of 18.

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania found another way. They analyzed nasal samples from 459 young people and identified certain genes (chemical instructions in the body for how a living thing develops) that revealed the patient's asthma type. The team found that 23% to 29% of patients had T2-high asthma, 35% to 47% had T-17 high, and 30% to 38% had low-low asthma.

There is medication for severe T2-high asthma but none for the subtypes of T2-low asthma. This new test could lead to the research and development of treatments for those types, said Juan Celedón, a senior author of the study.

"Asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood, and it disproportionately affects Black and Puerto Rican children," said Celedón. "It's essential that we develop new therapies to better treat these young patients."

Many people with asthma use an inhaler to manage symptoms.


The Rubik's Cube was released in 1980.

Speedcubing can be good for you

Scientists say that speedcubing, a competitive sport in which people try to solve puzzle cubes as quickly as possible, is good for your well-being.

Speedcubing first became popular in the 1980s, when the Rubik's Cube was a worldwide craze. Since then, 412,000 people have taken part in speedcubing competitions around the world. The current record for the fastest time to solve a Rubik's Cube is 3.13 seconds.

Researchers say speedcubing makes people feel good because it's challenging to solve a puzzle and satisfying when you do. It also creates social connections for people who share similar interests.

People can also experience a sense of "flow" while speedcubing, scientists said. This is a calm state that is similar to meditation. Studies have shown that people who often achieve a state of flow can have better mental and physical health.

AMAZING INVENTION

A battery that is made from fungi

The battery

Researchers have developed a "living battery" that uses fungi (a group of plant-like living things including mold, mildew, and mushrooms) to create electricity. Fungi survive by using decaying material or other living things for food, then turning those nutrients into energy.

The new device is 3D printed and uses two types of fungi to capture some of this energy and convert it into electricity. The team that made it mixed the fungi into a 3D printer ink that is biodegradable (which means it breaks down naturally) and nontoxic (not poisonous).

GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY; EMPA; ON LEFT PAGE: MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ANTIQUITIES (2); GETTY IMAGES

Photos of the week

Clear picture
Tim Crabb captured this photograph of a white-legged damselfly.

Tight fit
Pedro Jarque Krebs shot this image of a wallaby inside its mother's pouch.

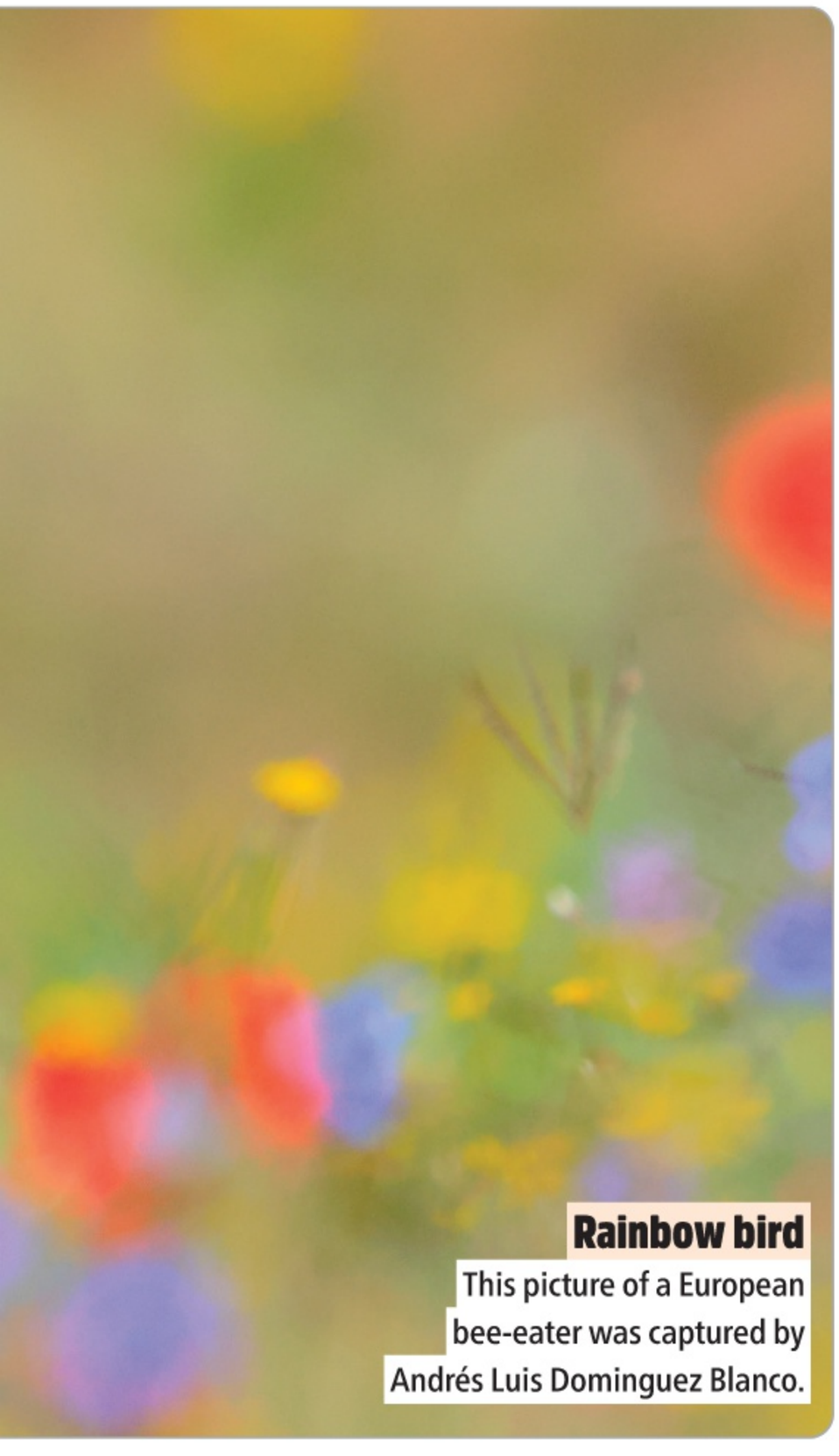
Fantastic fungi
This close-up of an ear-pick fungus was taken by Barry Webb.

TIM CRABB; GUSTAV PARENMARK; BARRY WEBB; JAMIE SPENSLEY; ANDRÉS LUIS DOMINGUEZ BLANCO; PEDRO JARQUE KREBS

Photos of the week

Sprinkles on top

This picture of a slime mold covered in sand was taken by Jamie Spensley.



Rainbow bird

This picture of a European bee-eater was captured by Andrés Luis Dominguez Blanco.

Eye spy

Gustav Parenmark took this image of an amber snail.

FUN FACT
Philadelphia Eagles players Saquon Barkley and Cooper DeJean both had birthdays on the day of the Super Bowl.

The Philadelphia Eagles celebrate their win.

Super Bowl trophy

The Super Bowl winners receive the Vince Lombardi trophy (right). It was named for a legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers in the 1960s. He led his team to wins in the first two Super Bowls. The sterling silver trophy is 22 inches tall and weighs 7 pounds.

Eagles win the Super Bowl

On February 9, the Philadelphia Eagles and the Kansas City Chiefs met in the Super Bowl, the championship game of the NFL (National Football League). The game was played at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana, and was a rematch of the 2023 Super Bowl, which the Chiefs won. This time, the Eagles dominated and came away with a 40–22 victory and their second NFL championship title.

Heading into the game, the pressure was on the Chiefs, who were the Super Bowl champions in 2023 and 2024. They were attempting to become the only team to win it three years in a row. They began the playoffs as the top-seeded (ranked) team in the AFC (American Football Conference). The Eagles, meanwhile, were the number two seed in the NFC (National Football Conference). Although they were 2–2 early in the regular season, they won 15 of their next 16 games before the Super Bowl.

Quarterbacks Jalen Hurts (left) and Patrick Mahomes after the game

In New Orleans, the Eagles defense was strong from the start. The Chiefs were able to run only a combined 10 plays on their first three possessions, and they trailed 10–0 when they got the ball back a fourth time. On the third play of that possession, Eagles rookie defensive back Cooper DeJean intercepted a pass thrown by Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes and returned it for a touchdown, giving the Eagles a 17–0 lead. The Eagles defense came up with another interception later in the second quarter, and by halftime, they were leading by a score of 24–0.

When the teams returned to the field, the Eagles increased their lead to 34–0. Kansas City finally scored a touchdown with 34 seconds left in the third quarter. After a third turnover, the Eagles increased their lead to 40–6 with eight minutes to play. The Chiefs scored two touchdowns late in the fourth but were unable to close the gap further. During the game, Mahomes was sacked six times.

Eagles quarterback Jalen Hurts was named the Most Valuable Player. He threw for 221 yards and two touchdowns. He also led the team in rushing with 72 yards, which included a touchdown.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

In men's games on February 8, sixth-ranked University of Florida upset Auburn University, the number one team, 90–81. The same day, 21st-ranked Clemson University beat Duke University, the number two team, 77–71. Duke had been on a 16-game winning streak. In women's action the next day, the fourth-ranked University of Texas upset the University of South Carolina, the number two team, 66–62.

MiLaysia Fulwiley of South Carolina (left) and Rori Harmon of Texas

CLUB SOCCER

In FA Cup action on February 9, Plymouth Argyle, the last-place team in the second division of English soccer, beat Liverpool FC, the first-place team in England's top division, 1–0, knocking them out of the tournament.

COLLEGE HOCKEY

On February 10, in the final of the 72nd annual men's Beanpot, a tournament for four colleges in the Boston area, Boston University upset Boston College, the country's top team, 4–1.

Left to right: Agnes Reisch of Germany, Nika Prevc of Slovenia, and Selina Freitag of Germany

FAST FLYERS
Ski jumpers can reach a speed of nearly 60 miles per hour before launching into the air.

Historic event in ski jumping

Top athletes from around the world gathered from February 6 to February 9 at the Olympic Jumping Complex in Lake Placid, New York, for an FIS (International Ski Federation) Ski Jumping World Cup competition. The event was historic because it was the first time an individual women's ski jumping World Cup competition was held in the US and the first World Cup where the prize money was the same for women and men.

Men have competed in ski jumping for more than 100 years, while women's competitions have taken place for about 25 years. Today, women earn about 30% of the prize money awarded to men, and at one recent event, the top female qualifier received shampoo instead of money. In Lake Placid, the FIS provided about $14,000 in prizes for the men and $4,800 for women. Thanks to fundraising by former US women's national team members, money from US Ski and Snowboard and USA Ski Jumping, and a portion of ticket sales, the women's prize ended up being equal.

There were two individual large hill events for men and women. Slovenia's Nika Prevc won both women's competitions. The top American woman was Annika Belshaw, who finished in 19th place and 14th place. Among the men, Norway's Johann Andre Forfang won the first competition, and Daniel Tschofenig of Austria won the second one. The top American man was Kevin Bickner, who had 13th-place and 14th-place finishes.

The event also had a mixed team competition. Germany came in first, followed by Norway and Austria. The US team (Belshaw, Bickner, Josie Johnson, and Tate Frantz) placed fifth.

COACH OF THE WEEK

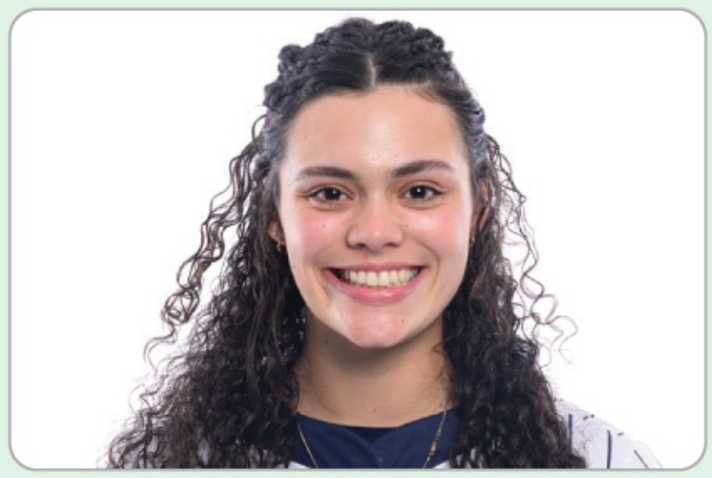
Coach's Name: **Paula Wagner**

Sport: **Figure skating**

"Coach Paula is amazing because she would do anything for her students. She wakes up at 4:45 a.m. each morning to teach us our choreography. She makes sure we have the opportunities we need to be great, from organizing shows to bringing in guest coaches. Even when I am struggling in a lesson, she turns on her favorite songs and dances to make us smile. She believes that the sky is the limit and has taught me to do the same." Grace, 11, Florida

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Lexi Hastings

AGE: 22 SPORT: SOFTBALL
TEAM: UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Early years I started figure skating when I was around 5. I was a foster kid, so it was a way for me to grow my self-esteem. I moved into competitive cheer, then my mom wanted me in team sports to learn about sportsmanship and collaboration. I started playing softball when I was 9.

Perfect match In high school, I started thinking about competing in college sports. I was torn between track and softball but realized I could be fast and dynamic in softball. Running bases is my favorite thing.

Big moments Last year, I broke the record for career stolen bases here at UConn. I was also the Player of the Year in the Big East conference.

Practice plan I'm always trying to elevate my game. I could be in the weight room, training to get faster or stronger; in batting cages, working on approach and visualization; or on the field.

Pre-game ritual One song I typically listen to is "The Champion" by Carrie Underwood.

Staying positive In the game of softball, failure is inevitable. A batting average of .300 is really good, but it means you're successful three out of 10 times. You may still have contributed a lot to the team, though.

Future goals After college, I'd love to play softball at the professional level or at least stay around the game, maybe by moving into coaching. I already run my own camps and clinics.

Wise words Enjoy being a teammate, work hard, and believe in yourself even when you fail.

GETTY IMAGES; UCONN ATHLETICS (2); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3); AP

DID YOU KNOW?
North America and South America cover an area of more than 16 million square miles.

Scenes from *The Americas*

Show explores the Americas

A new documentary series highlights the region's amazing animals and natural wonders.

The combined landmasses of North America and South America make up the most biodiverse continent on Earth, and a new 10-episode documentary series, *The Americas,* presents the region as it has never been seen before. The show is narrated by actor Tom Hanks (Woody in *Toy Story*) and will premiere on NBC at 7 p.m. ET on February 23. Episodes will also stream on Peacock.

Tom Hanks

To make *The Americas*, film crews went on 180 expeditions to areas that included the Arctic, the Atlantic Coast, the Gulf Coast, the American West, Mexico, the Caribbean, the Amazon rainforest, and Patagonia. Mike Gunton, the executive producer of the series, told *The Week Junior* that the show was made "to feel like an incredible safari to the greatest places in this supercontinent."

He said the team focused on locations that had "a signature and a sense of personality" and that would also provide dramatic stories.

A goal of the series is for viewers to "feel like you're close to the animals in their worlds," Gunton said. One way they did that was by using drones to follow a jaguar through a jungle and a herd of bison. They also used underwater cameras, which helped them see cave brittle stars—a newly discovered species—in ancient Mayan caves. To film flamingos, a team had to disguise themselves in a special pink covering that they pushed into a lake. The lake itself was toxic, so the film crew also had to wear special protective suits to stay safe.

Gunton said making *The Americas* was an ambitious undertaking, "logistically, technologically, and narratively." When people see it, he said, "I hope they'll say, 'Wow!'"

3 highlights from the series

Watching blue whales

The species are the largest animals on Earth and can grow to 100 feet long and weigh as much as 200 tons. *The Americas* captured a rarely seen moment in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean when some of the whales leaped out of the water.

Visiting the Andes Mountains

An entire episode is dedicated to this mountain range, the world's longest. It stretches 4,300 miles and across seven countries. The show highlights the Andes' diverse ecosystems, filled with rainforests, volcanoes, and unique species.

Following monarch butterflies

These insects are recognizable by their orange, black, and white wings. The show highlights how millions of monarchs migrate annually from North America and travel as far as 3,000 miles south to live where it is warmer.

BIG MOMENT
Flow is the first film from Latvia to be nominated for an Academy Award.

Animated film about a cat

Hollywood is in its awards season, and *Flow*, an animated film from Latvia, has become one of the most acclaimed films of the year. It recently won a Golden Globe award for Best Animated Feature, and it is up for Best Animated Feature and Best International Feature at the Academy Awards, the most prestigious event in the movie industry, on March 2. The film is now streaming on Max.

Flow follows a lone cat whose world is destroyed by a massive flood. When the cat ends up on a small boat with a dog, a lemur, and other animals, it must face two big fears: water and working with others. The movie was co-written and directed by Gints Zilbalodis, who based it on a short film he made about a cat afraid of water. He expanded the story for *Flow*. "I liked the cat being very independent and kind of stubborn, then going on a journey and changing to become more trustful and open," he told *The Week Junior*.

Gints Zilbalodis

The film has no dialogue and relies on visuals and music to tell its story. The animators referenced real landscapes and real animal behaviors and movements while they were working, and most of the animal sounds in the film come from real animals.

The film's style was partly inspired by Studio Ghibli, the Japanese studio known for films such as *My Neighbor Totoro*, which blends quiet moments in nature with adventure.

Before making *Flow*, Zilbalodis had worked mostly by himself. Like the cat, he had to change his ways, and he drew on that experience for the film. "I wanted to convey the fears and anxieties of working together and show how, through the support of others, we can overcome challenges," he said.

READER RECOMMENDS

Carmen Sandiego *(Netflix)*

"This action-packed series follows the adventures of Carmen Sandiego, a former student of the criminal organization V.I.L.E., and her friends. In each episode, they travel to locations around the world to stop V.I.L.E. from stealing artifacts such as a priceless mask from a museum or a samurai sword from a castle. As they meet new friends and enemies, Carmen's mysterious past is slowly uncovered. The animation is simple but full of detail, and the story is full of secrets and twists. I love how every episode ends on a cliffhanger. This is my absolute favorite show!" Haley, 12, North Carolina

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

Goldie
(Apple TV+)

This new animated series is based on a 2019 animated short of the same name. It follows Goldie, a giant girl with a big heart who lives in the town of Boysenberg. Each short episode finds her embarking on adventures with her best friends and learning to embrace their differences.

The Lion King at the Hollywood Bowl
(Disney+)

Last May, there was a special concert in Los Angeles, California, for the *The Lion King*'s 30th anniversary. Now audiences at home can see the performance featuring a 70-person orchestra, dancers, puppets, and *Lion King* stars.

Museum Alive with David Attenborough
(PBS.org) (PBS app)

Take a tour of the Natural History Museum in London, England, with world-famous naturalist David Attenborough. Along the way, computer-generated imagery (CGI) will bring creatures such as a saber-toothed tiger back to life.

COURTESY OF SIDESHOW AND JANUS FILMS; GETTY IMAGES; NETFLIX; APPLE TV+; DISNEY/FRANK MICELOTTA; ATLANTIC PRODUCTIONS; ON LEFT PAGE: BBC STUDIOS (3); JUSTIN ROSS/JR PHOTOGRAPHY/BBC STUDIOS; NICK GARBUTT/NATUREPL.COM/BBC STUDIOS; GETTY IMAGES (3)

FUN FACT
To celebrate *Star Wars*' 30th anniversary in 2007, the US Postal Service made 400 mail collection boxes look like the robot R2-D2.

Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles

A Star Wars game returns

A remastered version of the action platform game Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles was recently released for the game's 25th anniversary. It is available for the Nintendo Switch, PlayStation systems, Xbox platforms, and the PC. The game is rated T for Teen.

Jedi Power Battles is set in Star Wars' "galaxy far, far away." It originally came out a year after *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* was in theaters and has developed into a fan favorite over time. The latest version has been given a full graphical update and additional features for a new generation of fans.

Jedi Power Battles follows the general story of *The Phantom Menace*, with gamers playing as its two main heroes, Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi, plus three other Jedi: Mace Windu, Adi Gallia, and Plo Koon. In the old version, you had to work hard to unlock other playable characters, such as Queen Amidala and the iconic villain Darth Maul, but now they are available from the beginning.

Darth Maul

Jedi Power Battles has a side-scrolling format and is what some gamers call a brawler, so a large number of enemies are always coming at the heroes. They aren't so hard to defeat, but they really add up.

The Jedi have three main ways to fight: wielding a lightsaber, using the power of the force, and doing high-flying jumps. The sequences of their jumps are key to solving puzzles. The action is even more fun when you're playing in co-op mode, which allows two gamers to take on the evil Palpatine side by side.

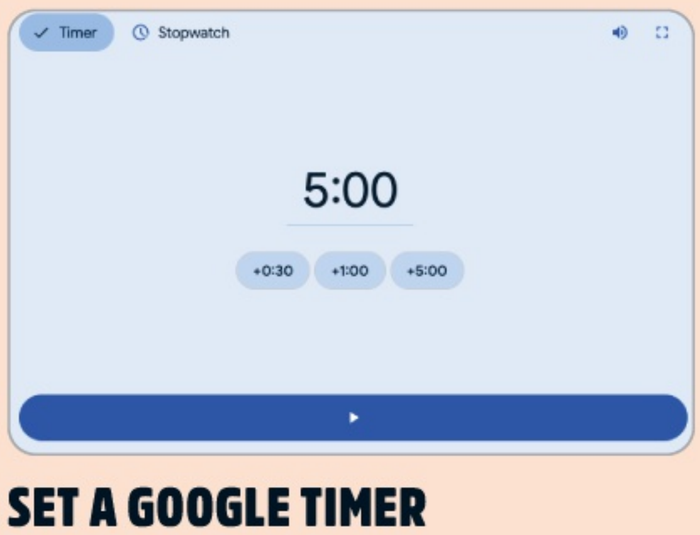
PODCAST OF THE WEEK

SKYLAR & BONES

Major podcast platforms

In each short episode of this series, listeners are invited into the world of fourth grader Skylar and her talking dog Bones as they make new friends, compete in game shows, and even team up with Santa Claus to solve a holiday mystery. The show is hosted by a real-life mother-daughter duo.

SECRETS & HACKS



SET A GOOGLE TIMER

google.com

Google can do more than search for facts and websites. You can use it to keep track of time, too. Type "set a timer for [insert a number] minutes," then hit return and you'll see a timer. You can choose whether to have it ring or stay silent when the time is up. There is a stopwatch feature as well.

APP OF THE WEEK

CAPYBARA GO!

Apple App Store, Google Play

The star of this game is a capybara, the world's largest rodent (it looks similar to a guinea pig). Players go on adventures with the capybara as it enhances its powers, meets goblins, and discovers treasure. The game's story unfolds through text boxes that help guide the way and unlock secrets.

LUCASFILM GAMES/ASPYR (2); PODBEAN; GOOGLE; HABB

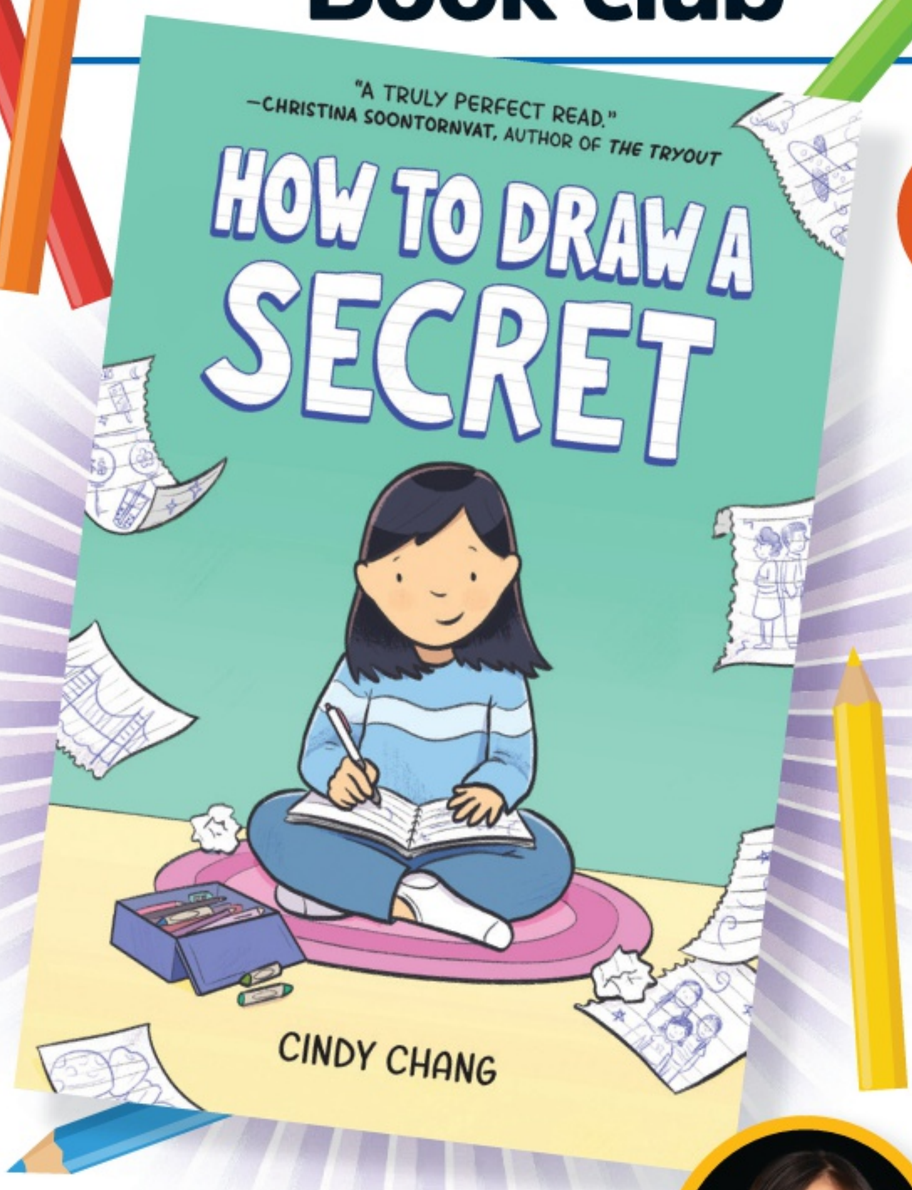
BOOK OF THE WEEK

How to Draw a Secret

By Cindy Chang

(*Allida*)

This graphic novel tells the story of the author's childhood growing up near San Francisco, California, with her mom and two older sisters. Cindy, a sixth grader, needs to keep the secret that her dad moved back to Taiwan four years ago and pretends to her friends that she lives with both parents. When her teacher suggests that she enter an art contest with the theme "What Family Means to Me," she plans to sketch a perfect family and keep her parents' separation a secret. Not long after, her grandmother passes away, and Cindy and her family travel to Taiwan for the funeral. Cindy sees her father a few times during the trip and desperately wants to know what happened between him and her mom. Eventually, her father reveals a secret that upsets her and her sisters. While one sister wants to go home early, Cindy confronts her dad, sharing all the frustrations that have been bottled up inside her. In the emotional ending, Cindy learns how to draw from her heart and accepts that family isn't about being picture-perfect. If you enjoyed the graphic novels *Measuring Up* or *Miss Quinces*, you may want to add this heartfelt story to your reading pile.



ASK THE AUTHOR

Cindy Chang

We spoke to the author of the Book of the Week.

What inspired this book?
I wanted to share my own story about my life growing up. I was excited and scared, but I knew I had to find a way to do it.

What was the hardest part about writing it?
The hardest part was taking my childhood memories and figuring out how to turn them into a story. I was surprised at how often I had to rewrite scenes.

What do you and the character Cindy have most in common?
We both love drawing, pineapple buns, and looking for sea cucumbers at aquarium touch pools!

Did you love to draw growing up?
Yes, I'd fill sketchbooks with drawings while listening to music in my room.

Favorite winter activity?
Baking cookies and having a hot drink. So comforting!

READER RECOMMENDS

Vote for your favorite books!

Have you read any books you've enjoyed so much you wish all kids knew about them? Contribute to our "50 Books Kids Love Most" list for 2025! The list, with quotes from readers, will be published in *The Week Junior* in June. We're looking for at least 100 kids to fill out our voting form. If you'd like to participate, have an adult email us at *hello@theweekjunior.com* with Books Kids Love in the subject line, and we'll send the form to them. Happy reading!

4 books that are set at theme parks

These exciting stories will make you feel like you're on a roller coaster!

Monsterious: Escape from Grimstone Manor

By Matt McMann

(G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers)

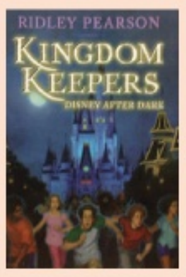
The first book in this series takes place at a theme park's haunted house. Three kids get trapped inside for the night and stumble upon a mysterious hidden staircase. The story is scary and funny at the same time. *Ages 8–12*

Foreverland

By Nicole C. Kear

(Imprint)

When Margaret gets upset about problems with her best friend, she runs away to Foreverland, an amusement park. At first, she has fun, staying overnight in the park's haunted house. But eventually she figures out she must deal with her problems rather than run away from them. *Ages 8–12*



Kingdom Keepers: Disney After Dark

By Ridley Pearson, illustrated by Tristan Elwell

(Disney Hyperion)

Five teens who work at Walt Disney World are trying to keep villains from taking control of the parks—and the world. Maleficent from Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* and the pirates from *Pirates of the Caribbean* are among the villains in the first book of this series. *Ages 8–12*

Marya Khan and the Awesome Adventure Park

By Saadia Faruqi, illustrated by Ani Bushry (Harry N. Abrams)

Marya and her friends go to an adventure park that contains an obstacle course, balance beam, and rock wall. Marya wants to beat the times her friends get completing the activities. But when she hurts her ankle, she learns the value of teamwork and friendship. *Ages 7–10*

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: TERRIFICSHOT STUDIO; GETTY IMAGES

Get a better night's sleep

Feeling rested and energized can help make you happier and healthier.

Most tweens and teens need about 9 to 11 hours of sleep to be their healthiest and do their best in school. However, studies consistently show most kids aren't getting enough sleep. That can affect everything from your ability to concentrate in class to your mood around your family and friends. Here are some ways you can get your sleep habits on track.

Set a regular bedtime

When you go to bed around the same time every night, your body gets used to the schedule and you fall asleep more easily. To figure out what your bedtime should be, think about when you have to wake up and work backward, counting the hours to pinpoint what time you need to be in bed. If you want to get 10 hours of sleep and have to wake up at 7 a.m., you would need to be asleep by 9 p.m.

Be sure to clock enough rest!

Relax before bed

Give yourself an hour to wind down before bedtime so your body and mind are ready for sleep. Split the hour into three 20-minute segments. Start with 20 minutes to prepare for the next day (you can pack your backpack and lay out your clothes). This helps you go to bed with a calm mindset and saves you time in the morning. Then set aside 20 minutes for hygiene (shower and brush your teeth). Finally, for the last 20 minutes, do something relaxing that helps you fall asleep more easily (like reading a book or listening to calming music).

Avoid sleep stealers

Things you do during the day can also affect your sleep. Try to avoid drinks and food with caffeine (like soda and chocolate) in the afternoon and evening.

Exercise can help you feel tired, but working out within two hours of your bedtime can make it hard to wind down. Try not to text or play video games in the two hours before bedtime either—the light from the screen can make your body think it's daytime.

Stay consistent

It's tempting to sleep in on weekends, but oversleeping can mess up your sleep rhythms for the week. Wake at your usual time, or close to it, so you can stay well rested all week. It can take two weeks or longer for your new sleep routine to work. If you can't sleep after 20 minutes of lying in bed, you can get up and do something else, like sitting in a comfortable chair to read, until you feel tired enough to drift off to sleep.

3 benefits of sleep

Greater strength Sleep can help you feel better physically because it can give your muscles time to grow and recover after exercise. Studies show that getting enough sleep helps basketball players score more shots and football players sprint faster.

Better concentration Most mental activity is enhanced by sleep. That includes memory, problem-solving, handling emotions, and judgment.

More creativity If you're feeling stuck on how to solve a problem, you may be more likely to come up with a creative solution after a short nap, according to research.

WARNING!
Ask an adult's permission before using the stove.
DID YOU KNOW?
Chocolate is made from the fruit of cacao trees, which are native to Central and South America.

Make hot chocolate cubes for chilly days

Ingredients

- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- 4 ounces (½ cup) heavy cream
- 1 (14-ounce) can condensed milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 (24-ounce) bag bittersweet chocolate chips

Instructions

1. Arrange 2 silicone jumbo ice cube molds (ours were 2-inch molds) on a sheet pan. Put the marshmallows in a small bowl. Next, make a double boiler: Fill a saucepan with 1 inch of water. Place a large, heat-safe bowl on top of the saucepan, making sure the bottom of the bowl is at least 1 inch from the water.
2. Combine the heavy cream, condensed milk, and vanilla in the bowl and whisk until smooth. Add the chocolate chips. Keep the bowl fixed in its place and heat the water in the bottom pan to a simmer. With an adult's help and using an oven mitt to steady the bowl (it will get hot!), continually stir the chocolate mixture until smooth, scraping the sides as needed. Remove from the heat, then use a spoon to quickly fill 10 of the cube wells three quarters full. Tap the molds on the counter to level the chocolate, then press marshmallows into the top of each.
3. Refrigerate cubes until hardened, about 3 hours. Whenever you want a cup of cocoa, remove a cube from the mold, place it in a mug, and top with 6 to 8 ounces of hot milk. Stir until the chocolate is dissolved. Makes about 10 cubes.

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK

DIM THE LIGHTS TO KEEP BIRDS SAFE

Spring migration season for birds is right around the corner. Birds can fly for thousands of miles, and you can do your part to help them travel safely. Many migratory birds, like the indigo bunting, common yellowthroat, and Swainson's thrush, get confused by artificial light and glass, which causes them to collide with windows. One way you can help minimize that hazard at home is to talk to your family about dimming or turning off any unnecessary outdoor lighting. You can also set lighting on timers so any outdoor lights aren't on all night. Besides benefiting birds, your family will also be saving energy—and money on electricity!

JOY HOWARD; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Puzzles

Word search

Can you find all these words associated with sleep? They are hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and can be forward or backward. When you're done, read the remaining letters to get a bonus message.

BEDTIME
BLANKET
CATCH SOME Z'S
COVERS
COZY
DARK
DOZE
DREAM
DROWSY
FORTY WINKS
MATTRESS
NIGHTLIGHT
PAJAMAS
PILLOWCASE
QUIET
QUILT
RELAX
REM SLEEP
REST
SHEETS
SIESTA
SNOOZE
SNORE
SNUG
TIRED
YAWN

D	A			N	D	I	B	E	D	T	I	M	E		M	A
C	O	V	E	R	S	L	C	Q	S	T	H	T	A	R	T	S	C
	A	Z	O	N	K	R	A	D	U	P	L	S	L	E	O	K
	E	W	E	S	P	S	T	H	G	I	L	T	H	G	I	N
T	S	N	A	A	N	D	C	I	U	L	E	S	N	U	G	I	S
Y	S	N	W	M	G	U	H	Q	P	L	N	T	I	N	S	W	C
T	E	K	N	A	L	B	S	L	C	O	Z	Y	R	T	U	Y	D
E	R	G	I	J	Y	R	O	A	O	W	F	D	E	R	I	T	D
	T	F	E	A	S	E	M	Z	L	C	E	E	L	P	H	R	
	T	S	A	P	S	I	E	S	T	A	H	N	A	T	E	O	
S	A	B	E	I	S	O	Z	N	A	S	N	D	X	A	H	F	O
R	M			R	E	M	S	L	E	E	P	S	M		E	S	

FOUR IN A ROW

Place four of the letters below to complete the first pair of words, in the same order in both words. Use the remaining four letters to complete the second pair of words, in the same order in both words.

C F H I N O R T

□A S□ □O□
RE□RES□ □□G
□A□EG□ □Y
□US□ □ME□

FILL IN THE BLANKS

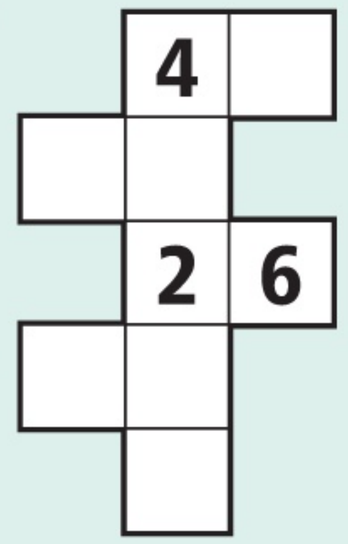
Fill in the blanks in each sentence with two words that are anagrams of each other, like STAR and ARTS. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

1. My little niece kept begging for an ice cream ____ , but ____ it was in her hand, she dropped it.
2. There have been so many ____ when I've bought things I thought I needed, only to discover that they were ____ I already owned.
3. We were originally heading toward the ____ part of the state, but with the storm coming, we quickly turned north and checked into the ____ hotel.

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Out of order

The numbers 1 to 9 can fit, one per square, so that no two consecutive numbers are in squares that touch in any way, even at a corner. Use the numbers already given to figure out where the rest of the numbers go.



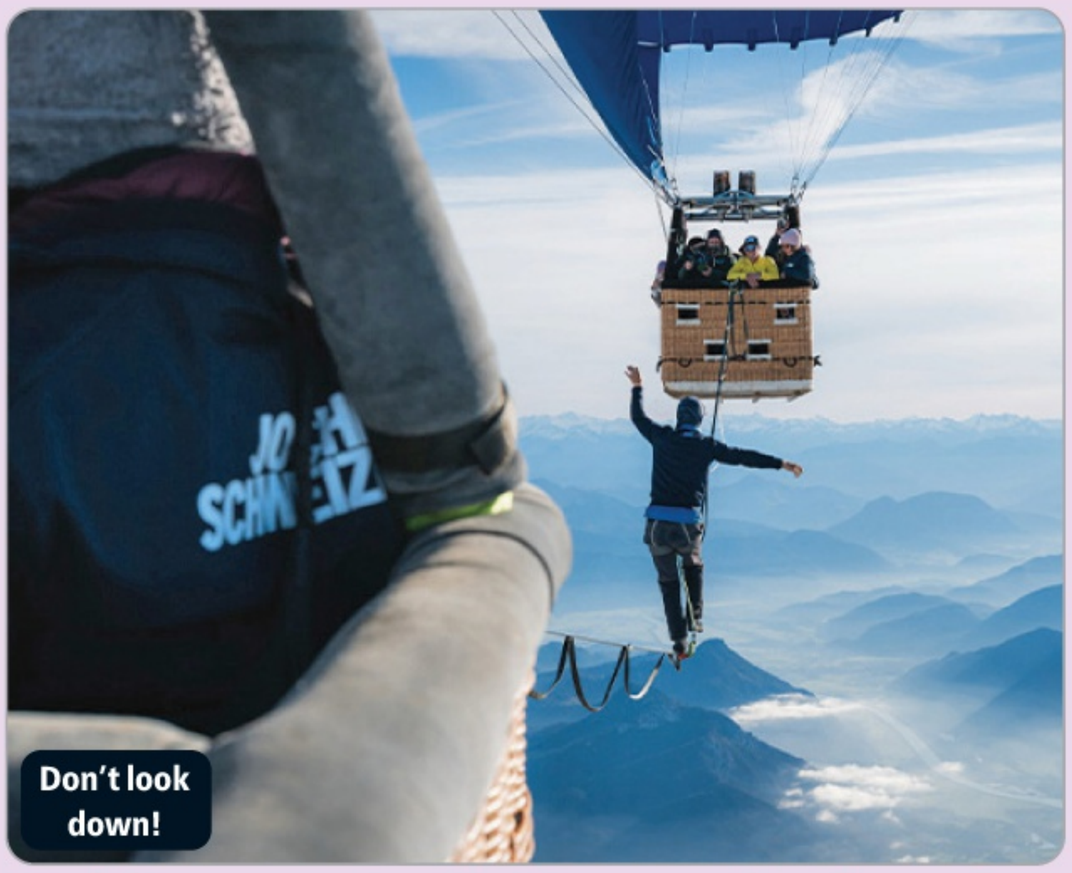
Spot the difference

These two pictures of a dog getting into mischief on the sofa appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Fill in the blanks hint: The first word in sentence 3 begins with EA.

That's unbelievable!



Don't look down!

Taking a stroll through the sky

Two daredevils from Germany journeyed more than 1.5 miles upward to break the world record for the highest slackline walk. A slackline is a thin piece of fabric stretched across a gap, similar to a tightrope. Friedi Kühne and Lukas Irmler crossed a line suspended between two hot-air balloons hovering about 8,200 feet above the German town of Riedering. They had to brave the swaying of the balloons, which moved up and down as they walked. Once the feat was complete, Irmler called it a "glorious moment."

A gallery of guffaws

The world's funniest museum

The first-ever museum dedicated entirely to laughter has opened in Zagreb, Croatia. The HaHaHouse is designed to make people of all ages chuckle. On arrival, visitors must pass through a "happiness scanner" before enjoying more than 40 humorous installations designed by creators from all over the world. One highlight is a spiral slide called the Happy Portal, which takes visitors to the "playground of laughter." Creator Andrea Golubić said the museum is her way of "spreading joy and connecting through laughter."

Sophie O'Neill's stitches in time

A diary of hand-sewn memories

Every day, Sophie O'Neill keeps a diary—but instead of a pen and paper, she uses a needle and thread. O'Neill, who lives in Scotland, traces a symbol that represents her day onto an embroidery hoop and then sews a design over it. Her images—such as a holiday stocking, a bridge she noticed on a day out, and a tissue to symbolize a time when she wasn't feeling well—are inspired by memorable moments in her life. After five years, she has five full embroidery diaries featuring 1,800 designs.

Real or fake?

Did they share tokens of affection?

Saying "I do" with Chuck E. Cheese

An April Fools' prank led a Massachusetts couple to an unusual wedding venue: Chuck E. Cheese. Leilani Trautman and Quilee Simeon contacted the restaurant chain after seeing a website offering weddings "officiated by Chuck E. himself." Although the website had been created as a joke, the couple booked a birthday party package and celebrated their marriage with the mouse mascot. After enjoying pizza and cake, each guest got an "All You Can Play" pass for the arcade. Is this story true, or are we playing games?*

*Real! The couple held the wedding at 8 a.m., before the restaurant opened to the public. Although their first dance was interrupted by a ticket blaster machine, the bride said the event "went above and beyond expectations."

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; ROBERT GAŠPERT, LUKŠA MAROTTI (2); SWNS; COURTESY OF MATT SHEARER; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Your turn

Editor's note

Congratulations to Mac Barnett, who has been selected as the new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature (p5)! Every two years, an author who has excelled at creating literature for young people is chosen for this honor, and Barnett certainly qualifies. He has written more than 60 children's books that have sold millions of copies around the world and been translated into more than 30 languages. We have featured him in past issues of *The Week Junior*, and we are big fans! Barnett said he was "speechless" when he received the news of his appointment and that he's excited to talk to young people and adults about the power of children's literature as he travels the US during his tenure as ambassador. Schools, libraries, and community organizations can submit a proposal to have Barnett speak to their group. More information can be found at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-MacBarnett.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

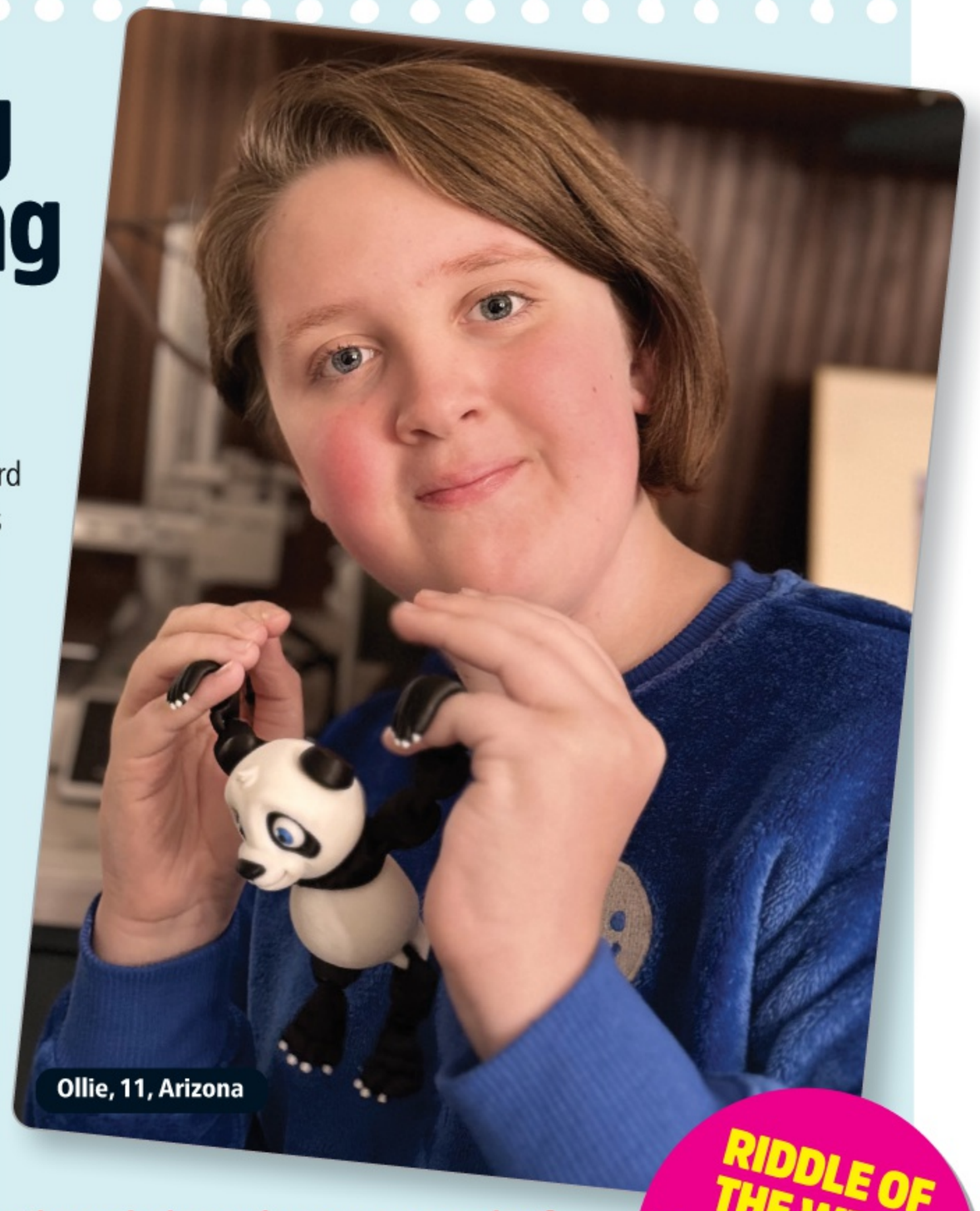
CHARITY OF THE WEEK

The Wooden Floor

This organization helps students achieve their goals in school and in life. The program focuses on dance training and performance to help build self-esteem. The group, which also offers academic and family support, was founded in 1983 as a ballet summer program in California. It has since helped thousands of students from elementary school to college. Find out more at thewoodenfloor.org.

The Wooden Floor
From here, you can step anywhere.

Lending a helping hand



Ollie, 11, Arizona

"I got a 3D printer for Christmas, and when I heard about the Los Angeles fires that broke out in January, I knew there had to be something I could do to help. I have since started selling 3D prints. At first, I expected to raise $100, but, to my complete surprise, I have raised $1,000! I am so glad I was able to help, and I hope other people will try to raise money to help people in Los Angeles too."

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
What's always right ahead of you but can't be seen?
The future

Show us your favorite issue of *The Week Junior*!

***The Week Junior* will be marking its fifth anniversary in March. To celebrate, we're asking readers to send us photos of themselves holding the issue they enjoyed most since they began subscribing. Some of the photos we receive will appear in Issue 257. If you'd like to participate, ask an adult to email your photo to *hello@theweekjunior.com* with Favorite Issue in the subject line. Thank you for helping us look back on an amazing five years of publication!**

IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I enjoyed making the festive paper lanterns. It was fun!" Zaynab, 10, Texas

"We like to read *The Week Junior* everywhere and anywhere." Talia, 10, and Benjamin, 8, New York

"I love the video game section. Thanks for sharing these exciting games with us." Hriday, 10, Michigan

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Name: **Javier Dominguez**

School: **Julia R. Masterman Laboratory and Demonstration School**

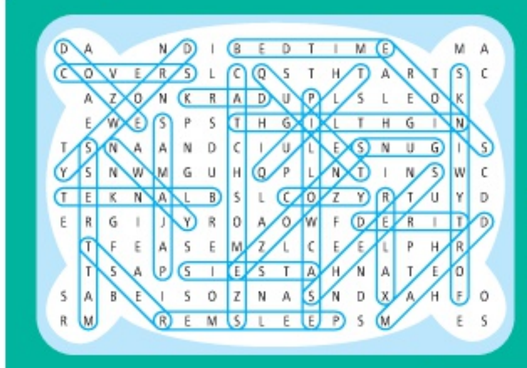
"Dr. Dominguez, or Dr. D. as we call him, is an amazing teacher! He is not too strict but just strict enough that there is not too much goofing off. He makes class really fun, and he is really nice and very good at teaching. One thing I love about him is that he always tells us funny stories. He is the best teacher ever!"

Mira, 10, Pennsylvania

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

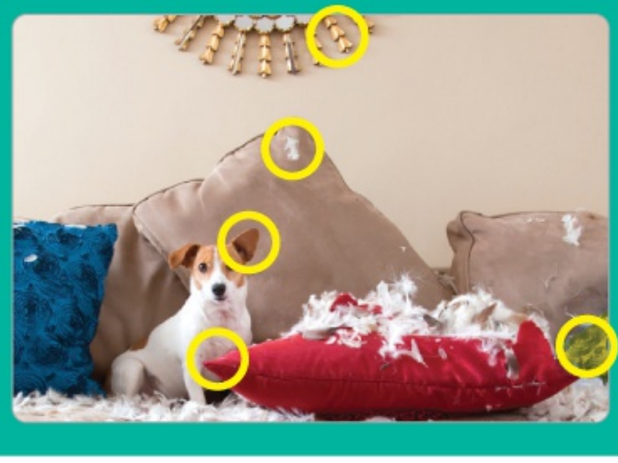
Puzzle answers (from page 26)



Word search
Unused letters: Animals that can sleep standing up include giraffes, elephants, bison, and horses.

Four in a row
fashion, refreshing
category, customer

Fill in the blanks
1. cone, once
2. times, items
3. eastern, nearest



Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** Jalen Hurts **2** True **3** c) Mace Windu **4** True **5** c) Porpoises **6** Laughter **7** False. Saturn has the most moons. **8** b) Mac Barnett **9** b) Tom Hanks **10** c) Tetinebefou **11** True **12** "What Family Means to Me" **13** False. Wild plants have more trichomes. **14** a) A'ja Wilson **15** Team Fluff

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

Quiz

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 Who won the Most Valuable Player award in this year's Super Bowl?

2 True or false? Scientists have found that speedcubing is good for people's well-being.

True ☐ False ☐

3 People can play as which galactic hero in the remastered game Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles?

a) Ashoka Tano b) Luke Skywalker
c) Mace Windu

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 True or false? The new movie *Flow* has no dialogue.

True ☐ False ☐

5 High-speed cameras showed that northern cricket frogs moved similarly to which other animal?

a) Porcupines b) Pumas c) Porpoises

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 A new museum in Zagreb, Croatia, is the first to be dedicated entirely to what?

7 True or false? Jupiter has the most moons of any planet in our solar system.

True ☐ False ☐

8 Who was recently announced as the new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature?

a) Jason Reynolds b) Mac Barnett
c) Meg Medina

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4

2

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

15

14

13

9 Which actor narrates the new nature documentary *The Americas*?

a) Morgan Freeman
b) Tom Hanks
c) Sigourney Weaver

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 What is the name of the ancient Egyptian doctor whose tomb was recently found?

a) Saqqara
b) Djoser
c) Tetinebefou

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

11 True or false? Amy Schneider has the second-longest winning streak in *Jeopardy!* history.

True ☐ False ☐

12 In the book *How to Draw a Secret*, what is the theme of the art contest Cindy enters?

13 True or false? Wild tomato plants have fewer trichomes than crop plants do.

True ☐ False ☐

14 Which WNBA star recently revealed her first signature shoe for Nike?

a) A'ja Wilson
b) Caitlin Clark
c) Sabrina Ionescu

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 Which team won the Lombarky Trophy in this year's Puppy Bowl?

NIKE; DISCOVERY/ANIMAL PLANET; COURTESY OF SIDESHOW AND JANU FILMS; GETTY IMAGES (2)

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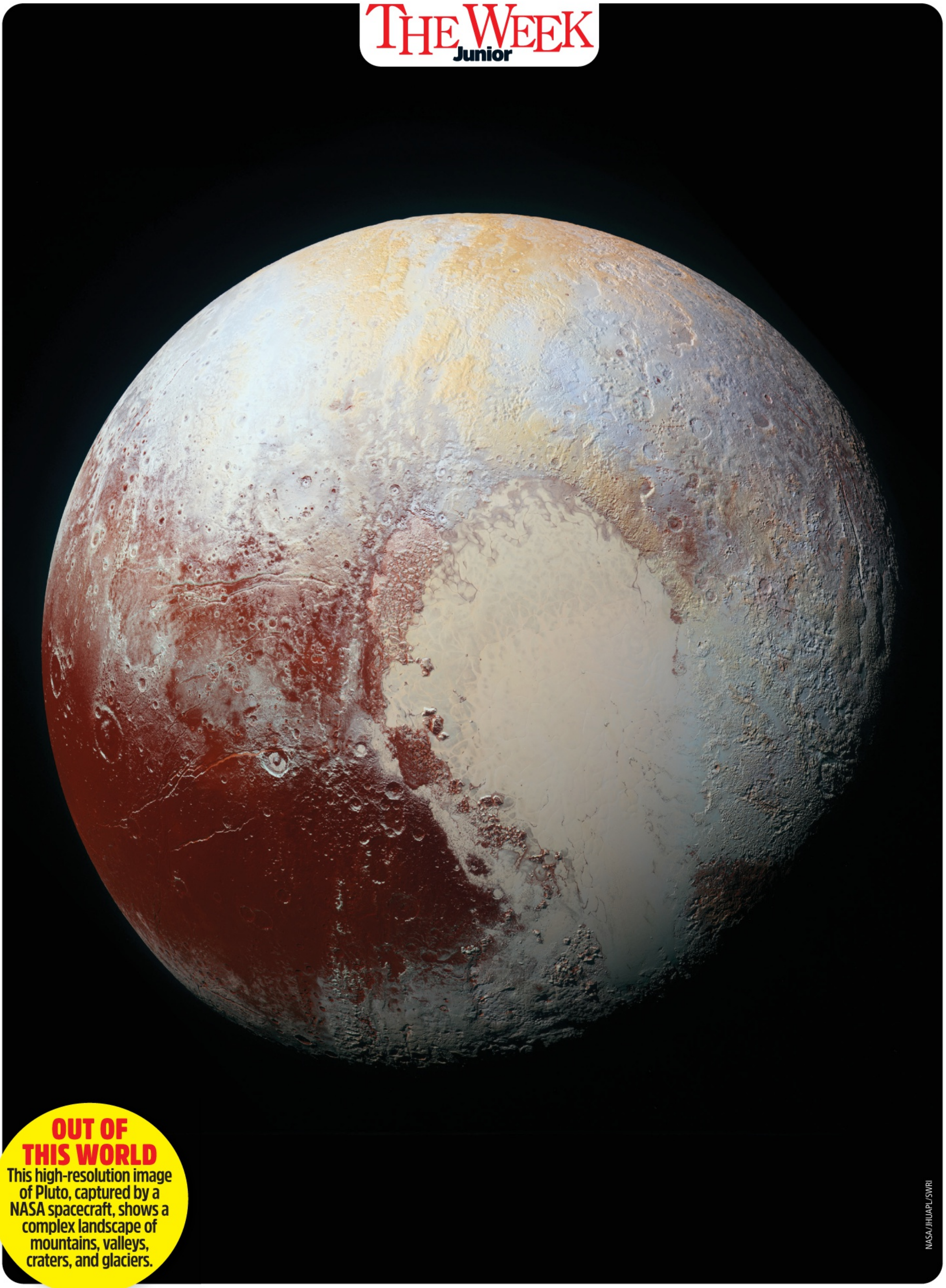

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